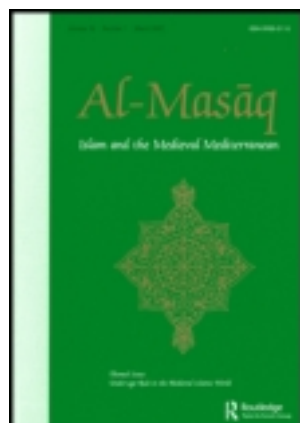


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“A Crusade from the First”¹: The Norman Conquest of Islamic Sicily, 1060–1091²

PAUL E. CHEVEDDEN

ABSTRACT *In the creation myth of the Crusades, Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099) is the founding father and 1095 is the critical year. During the twentieth century, French, Spanish, and English scholars challenged this myth; yet this myth remains as durable as ever. Because the origins of the crusading enterprise came to be associated with the so-called First Crusade (1095–1102), scholars have created a vision of crusading at odds with Pope Urban’s vision, which views the “First” Crusade as the third part of a triptych: first, the Norman conquest of Sicily (1060–1091); then, the Castilian and Catalan advances in Iberia; and finally the 1095 Eastern Crusade. Today, the study of the Crusades is hampered by a failure to concentrate on the direct evidence and to take into account what contemporaries understood by crusading. To get a sense of what contemporaries understood by crusading, this paper examines the Norman Crusade in Sicily, drawing upon both Christian and Islamic sources.*

Keywords: Crusades – 1st Crusade (1096–1099); Sicily (kingdom) – crusades; Normans – in Sicily; Roger I, count of Sicily; Robert Guiscard, duke of Apulia, Calabria and Sicily; Amatus of Montecassini, chronicler; Geoffrey Malaterra, chronicler; William of Apulia, chronicler; al-Sulamī, ‘Alī b. Ṭāhir, author

Im Anfang war die Tat.
[In the beginning was the Deed.]
–Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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¹Carl Erdmann, *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankens* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935; reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), p. 121; trans. Marshall W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart as *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, foreword and additional notes by Marshall W. Baldwin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 133.

²A shorter version of this essay was first presented as a paper at the 18th International Conference of the Texas Medieval Association, Texas Tech University, 2–4 October 2008. I thank the members of the panel, “Crusade and Conquest”, Donald J. Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon, for their encouragement and support. Thanks also are due to Noha Mohama Akkari for help on the translation of *tafarruḍ* in the passage from al-Sulamī’s *Kitāb al-jihād* discussed below, and to April Jehan Morris for her help on the caption title for Figure 5.

Carl Erdmann contends that the Norman war in Sicily (1060–1091) “resembled a crusade to a degree unprecedented by any earlier aggression upon heathens that we know of”, and that the Norman historians who wrote of it portrayed it “as a crusade from the first”.³ The so-called founding father of crusading, Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099), could not have agreed more. He viewed the early Crusades as forming a triptych: first, the Norman conquest of Sicily (1060–1091); then, the Castilian and Catalan advances in Iberia; and finally the 1095 Eastern Crusade. Sicily, Spain, and the Eastern Mediterranean were, for Urban, three fronts in a single war to recover from Islam the lost lands of Christendom.⁴ Why have the Crusades conventionally been viewed as a movement that began in 1095 with Pope Urban’s appeal to “rescue Jerusalem and the other Churches of Asia from the power of the Saracens”?⁵ This has occurred because the history of the Crusades came to be viewed almost exclusively as the outcome of the so-called First Crusade (1095–1102). Such a conceptualisation distorts the true historical picture of how the Crusades developed and creates a vision of crusading at odds with Urban’s vision.

Ever since the Crusades became the subject of serious scholarly attention two centuries ago, the popular notion of the Crusades, as a movement created by Pope Urban in 1095, has held sway. Scholars have accepted the fundamental maxim of the popular notion of the Crusades – that 1095 begins the crusading movement – and have refined, rectified, and reinforced the conclusions of this conceptualisation of the Crusades. Over the course of the twentieth century, research showed that the new wine of investigative findings had burst the theoretical wine-skins of the popular notion of the Crusades, but the vast majority of scholars who perceived themselves to be working in the field of Crusade history were insistent that the new wine be put in the old wine skins.

Did it happen otherwise?

Alternative histories of the Crusades were proposed during the twentieth century, but they were never able to supplant the popular view of the Crusades that promotes Pope Urban as the founding father of the enterprise and 1095 as its

³ Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 121–122; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 133–134.

⁴ Alfons Becker, *Papst Urban II (1088–1099)*, volumes I–II [Monumenta Germaniae historica, Schriften, volume XIX, i–ii] (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1964–1988), I: 229–230; II: 337, 378, 383, 384, 390, 395–400, 403–404, 407; *idem*, “Urbain II, pape de la croisade”, in *Les champenois et la croisade: actes des quatrième Journées rémoises, 27–28 novembre 1987*, ed. Yvonne Bellenger and Danielle Quéruel (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres, 1989), pp. 9–17, at pp. 15, 17; *idem*, “Le voyage d’Urbain II en France”, in *Le Concile de Clermont de 1095 et l’appel à la croisade: Actes du Colloque universitaire international de Clermont-Ferrand (23–25 juin 1995) organisé et publié avec le concours du Conseil régional d’Auvergne*, ed. André Vauchez [Collection de l’Ecole française de Rome, volume CCXXXVI] (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, Palais Farnèse, 1997), pp. 127–140, at p. 134; and *idem*, “Urbain II et l’Orient”, in *Il Concilio di Bari del 1098: Atti del Convegno Storico Internazionale e celebrazioni del IX Centenario del Concilio*, ed. Salvatore Palese and Giancarlo Locatelli (Bari: Edipuglia, 1999), pp. 123–144, at pp. 136–137; Paul E. Chevedden, “The Islamic view and the Christian view of the Crusades: A new synthesis”, *History*, 93 (April 2008): 181–200; “From crusading facts to crusading theory: Pope Urban II’s conceptualisation of the Crusades” (under consideration for publication in another journal).

⁵ *The Councils of Urban II*, 1: *Decreta claromontensia*, ed. Robert Somerville [Annuaire historiae conciliorum, Supplementum, volume I] (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1972), p. 124.

founding year. Moreover, a number of these "alternative" histories have been modifications of, not alternatives to, the 1095 paradigm. A dogmatic and arbitrary postulate of the crusading enterprise associated with the 1095 paradigm is that the First Crusade must have French participation. Accordingly, Prosper Boissonnade, in 1934, linked the start of the Crusades to the first expedition targeting Islamic Spain that involved French knights, a trans-Pyrenean expedition led by the Norman Roger de Toeni in 1018.⁶

Another dogmatic and arbitrary postulate of the 1095 paradigm is that the first appearance of the crusading enterprise as a political force can be established by determining the first appearance of the outward signs by which the crusading enterprise came to be known (e.g. the indulgence, vow, Cross, and privileges). In his monumental study of papal bulls of Crusade in Spain published in 1958, José Goñi Gaztambide adopted this disputable and unproved assumption and tied the onset of crusading to the granting of the first Crusade indulgence. He identified the earliest expedition for which he found evidence of a Crusade indulgence – the Barbastro Crusade of 1063–1065 – as a Crusade.⁷ Historians might have followed up this finding by recognising the Barbastro Crusade as the First Crusade.⁸ Instead, they continued to assume that Urban II had first granted a Crusade indulgence in 1095 and that there was an absolute distinction between the so-called "First"

⁶ Prosper Boissonnade, "Les premières croisades françaises en Espagne: Normands, Gascons, Aquitains et Bourguignons", *Bulletin Hispanique*, 36 (January–March 1934): 5–28. This idea was first proposed by Joseph Bédier in his *Les légendes épiques: Recherches sur la formation des chansons de geste*, 2nd ed., volumes I–IV (Paris: H. Champion, 1914–1921), III: 368, and was championed by Arnold J. Toynbee in his *A Study of History*, volumes I–XII (London: Oxford University Press, 1934–1961), V: 242. See also Ernest Petit de Vausse, "Croisades bourguignonnes contre les Sarrasins d'Espagne au XI^e siècle", *Revue historique*, 30 (1886): 259–272; Prosper Boissonnade, "Cluny, la papauté et la première croisade internationale contre les Sarrasins d'Espagne, Barbastro (1064–1065)", *Revue des questions historiques*, 3^e série, 21 (October 1932): 257–301; *idem*, "Les relations des ducs d'Aquitaine, comtes de Poitiers, avec les états chrétiens d'Aragon et de Navarre (1014–1237)", *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de l'ouest*, 3rd ser., 10 (1934): 264–316; Maurice Chaume, "En marge des croisades bourguignonnes d'Espagne", *Annales de Bourgogne*, 9 (1937): 68–73; *idem*, "Les premières croisades bourguignonnes au-delà des Pyrénées", *Annales de Bourgogne*, 18 (1946): 161–165.

⁷ José Goñi Gaztambide, *Historia de la bula de la cruzada en España* (Vitoria: Editorial del Seminario, 1958), pp. 50–51. Carl Erdmann calls the Crusade indulgence granted by Pope Alexander II (r. 1061–1073) to the participants in the Barbastro campaign "the first papal crusading indulgence whose text we possess" (Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 125; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 138). This assessment finds support in Nikolaus Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses im Mittelalter vom Ursprung bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, volumes I–III (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1922–1923; reprint, Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2000), I: 134; Augustin Fliche, *La réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne (1057–1123)* [Histoire de l'Église, depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours, volume VIII] (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1950), pp. 52–53; Hans Eberhard Mayer, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1965); trans. John Gillingham as *The Crusades*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 26; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 24–27; Paul E. Chevedden, "Canon 2 of the Council of Clermont (1095) and the Crusade indulgence", *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum*, 37, no. ii (2005): 253–322, at 278–286; Robert W. Shaffern, *The Penitents' Treasury: Indulgences in Latin Christendom, 1175–1375* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2007), p. 48. For the text of the Barbastro indulgence, see *Epistolae pontificum Romanorum ineditae*, ed. Samuel Loewenfeld (Leipzig: Veit, 1885; reprint, Graz: Akademische Druck-Verlagsanstalt, 1959), p. 43, no. 82; trans. Chevedden, "Crusade indulgence", 279.

⁸ On the Barbastro Crusade, see Paul E. Chevedden, "The Islamic interpretation of the Crusade: A new (old) paradigm for understanding the Crusades", *Der Islam*, 83 (June 2006): 90–136, at 134–135; *idem*, "Crusade indulgence", 277–286; with detailed bibliographies in each article.

Crusade and all earlier expeditions of a similar nature, even those that were associated with a Crusade indulgence.⁹

Historians, however, did agree with Goñi Gaztambide that the Crusades and their institutional apparatus were mutually and reciprocally dependent on one another. By defining a Crusade as “an indulgenced Holy War” (*una guerra santa indulgenciada*),¹⁰ Goñi Gaztambide had made crusading and its institutional apparatus one and inseparable. Crusading can be found only in combination with its institutional apparatus, and is deemed incapable of existing separate from this apparatus. Crusading can never be sundered and separated from its institutional apparatus because crusading is not considered to exist *per se*, apart from this apparatus. In the same way “as weight is a property of stone, or fluidity of water, or touch to a body or intangibility to a void”,¹¹ crusading institutions are a property of the Crusades. Crusading has no independent existence of its own, severed from its institutional apparatus. Crusading reality is considered to be institutionally dependent.

With no life of its own apart from its institutional apparatus, crusading could not be determined into action by crusading acts alone but could only be set in motion by a cause outside itself, a fortuitous element that makes crusading possible. Absent any anchoring to a meaning or purpose intrinsic to itself, crusading would become whatever scholars subjectively thought it to be, rather than what crusading objectively was in and of itself. Thus, Erdmann explains the Crusades in terms of the fusion of totally opposed values – war and peace – in the union of war and pilgrimage.¹² Jonathan Riley-Smith determines the nature of the Crusade, not from its purpose, but from its extrinsic religious incentive: a grant to crusaders of “the remission of all their sins” in return for engaging in “a military enterprise”.¹³ In so doing, he transforms an enterprise with the purpose “to liberate the Church of God” (*ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei*)¹⁴ into an activity “primarily about benefiting [the individual crusader], since he was engaged in an act of self-sanctification”.¹⁵

⁹ The assumption that Urban II had granted the first Crusade indulgence is coupled with a denial that the Crusade indulgence associated with the Barbastro expedition is a genuine Crusade indulgence or a disparagement of the Barbastro indulgence as being somehow inferior to Pope Urban's Clermont indulgence. See Chevedden, “Crusade indulgence”, 283–284. Erdmann maintains that the Barbastro indulgence was “the first papal crusading indulgence” but contends that crusading required additional stimuli in order to emerge: “the crusading vow and the cross” and, above all, “the unification of holy war with pilgrimage” (Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 125, 319; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 138, 348). Not even a genuine crusading institution can provide evidence that a Crusade exists!

¹⁰ Goñi Gaztambide, *Historia de la bula*, 46, 51.

¹¹ Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 1.453–1.454; trans. David R. Slavitt, *De Rerum Natura: The Nature of Things – A Poetic Translation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 20.

¹² Erdmann, *Entstehung*, vii, 319; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, xxxiii, 348.

¹³ Urban II to all the faithful in Flanders, c. December 1095; Heinrich Hagenmeyer, *Epistulae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes: Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088–1100* (Innsbruck: Wagner'sche universitäts-buchhandlung, 1901), p. 136; trans. Louise Riley-Smith and Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: Idea and Reality, 1095–1274* [Documents of Medieval History, volume IV] (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 38.

¹⁴ *Decreta claromontensia*, ed. Somerville, 74; trans. Paul E. Chevedden, “Canon 2 of the Council of Clermont (1095) and the Goal of the Eastern Crusade: ‘To liberate Jerusalem’ or ‘To liberate the Church of God?’”, *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum*, 37, no. i (2005): 57–108, at 58.

¹⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 33; *idem*, *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 75; *idem*, “Rethinking the Crusades”, *First Things*, 101 (March 2000): 20–23, at 20; *idem*, *The Crusades: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. xxx–xxxii; *idem*, “Christians

Crusading thus gets subordinated to the desire to achieve personal salvation and is regarded as being "first and foremost an act of devotion".¹⁶ As a "devotional war", with war itself regarded "as a devotion" or "as a penance and a devotion", crusading could no longer lay claim to being "an act of love" (towards Christ and other Christians) or having an altruistic purpose, because crusading "was primarily about benefiting [crusaders]" as individuals in "an act of devotion" and "personal penitence".¹⁷

These bizarre and idiosyncratic conceptions of the Crusades are based upon two false premises. The first is that the apparatus of crusading is a necessary element of crusading; and the second is that the goal or purpose of the Crusade does not provide an inducement or motive for action, only the incentive does: "the association of war with pilgrimage" or "the association of war and penance".¹⁸ Such views ignore the simple but basic fact that crusading had a specific reality in deeds and events before it acquired an institutional apparatus. These views also overlook the undeniable reality that crusading was an intrinsically motivated activity undertaken for its own sake as an end in itself.

The insistence on the inseparability of crusading and its institutional apparatus became a hallmark of Crusade scholarship.¹⁹ Accordingly, the institutional

(footnote continued)

of the Middle East under the Franks: I. Motives for the Crusades: A European perspective", in *Christianity: A History in the Middle East*, ed. Habib Badr, Suad Abou el Rouss Slim, and Joseph Abou Nohra (Beirut: Middle East Council of Churches, Studies & Research Program, 2005), pp. 548–558, at p. 555; *idem*, *What Were the Crusades?*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), p. 58.

¹⁶ Norman Housley, *Fighting for the Cross: Crusading to the Holy Land* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 26.

¹⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), p. 26 ("an act of devotion"); *idem*, "The state of mind of Crusaders to the East, 1095–1300", in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 66–90, at pp. 77, 78, 84 ("devotional war"), 81, 88 ("war as a devotion"), 90 ("war as a penance and a devotion"); *idem*, *First Crusaders*, 64 ("personal penitence"), 75 ("primarily about benefiting themselves"). Riley-Smith has moved away from his earlier view of crusading as "an act of love" in his "Crusading as an act of love", *History*, 65 (June 1980): 177–192. His current theory of crusading as "devotional war" maintains that crusading is "primarily a penitential exercise" (Riley-Smith, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 23). Riley-Smith starts by saying that "[Pope] Urban assured his audiences that the enterprise would be a demonstration of Christian charity, because the crusaders were going to risk their lives out of love of God and their neighbour", but he concludes as follows: "I have found no direct reference in the charters to the crusade as an exercise of fraternal love", and "no mention is made anywhere in the crusaders' charters of helping Constantinople". Moreover, "[the crusaders] were far more interested in freeing [Jerusalem] than in the sufferings of the eastern Christians. They saw themselves as penitents performing a severe penance . . . They believed that their military service, at any rate if completed, would profit their souls". In addition, Riley-Smith claims that Pope Urban gave greater importance "in his [crusading] message" to "the idea of the knight as a penitent" than to "the old notion of the knight serving God in arms", and that "the penitential element in crusading" is "its most important defining feature"; Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 61, 63–66, 74–75; *idem*, *What Were the Crusades?*, xii, 3, 55.

¹⁸ Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 77–78.

¹⁹ See, for example, Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 20, which considers the taking of the Cross "with the intention of engaging in penitential combat" as belonging to the intrinsic nature of crusading, or Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, 5, which defines a Crusade as "an expedition authorized by the pope on Christ's behalf, the leading participants in which took vows and consequently wore crosses and enjoyed the privileges of protection at home and the indulgence, which, when the campaign was not destined for the East, was equated with that granted to crusaders to the Holy Land".

character of crusading and its official ecclesiastical organisation became a central concern of scholars at the expense of the actual experience and practice of crusading.²⁰ In 1998, Christopher Tyerman took the doctrine of the inseparability of crusading and its institutional apparatus a step further when he proposed that this apparatus had to be fully developed before crusading could be said to have emerged. The Crusades must be fully fledged in all their institutional plumage to exist at all. Crusades that were partly fledged, half-fledged, or almost fledged in their institutional development were not considered to be fully formed and legitimate Crusades. In Tyerman's view, the Crusades did not evolve; they appeared. And he credits their appearance to Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216), whose "codification of crusade" during the early thirteenth century brought "official clarity, attempted definition and some uniformity" to "a fragmented series of military and religious activities" that only began to take shape as "a coherent movement retrospectively when that movement was constructed after 1187".²¹

Two twentieth-century scholars stand out among their contemporaries for their attempts to reconceptualise the Crusades: Augustin Fliche (d. 1951) and Christopher Dawson (d. 1970). These scholars both broke with the 1095 paradigm and presented an explanation of the Crusades unrelated to the fundamental presuppositions of the conventional view. Although they never developed their ideas at length, both Fliche and Dawson reinterpreted the Crusades as the product of an activity, so that the activity that produced crusading came before the formalisation of that activity in conceptual formulations, theoretical understandings, and institutional arrangements. In doing so, Fliche and Dawson made the Crusades independent of their institutional apparatus.

In Fliche's telling, the Crusades become a story about the rise of the Church to a position of leadership in the war with Islam due to the progressive "territorial retreat of the Empire" from the Mediterranean and the Empire's neglect of its "duties to St. Peter" in "the defence of Christendom against Islam". The German Empire could no longer be counted on to fulfil its "traditional obligation of protecting Christendom against external enemies", and so this task fell to the Normans in Italy and the sovereigns of the Christian states in Iberia, along with their trans-Pyrenean allies in France. The papacy could not remain impervious to the struggle against Islam because it had been drawn directly into this conflict by Muslim attacks on central Italy,²² and because it had a concerted interest in

²⁰ See especially Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*; *idem*, *First Crusaders*; *idem*, *What Were the Crusades?*; *idem*, *Crusades: A History*; *idem*, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*. Sarah Lambert criticises Riley-Smith for creating a Whig history of the Crusades by taking "a bunch of dogmatic, ideologically driven, prescriptive material" on the Crusades dating from "the period post-1140s" and "[using] it as evidence for a concept [of what the Crusades were]". See Sarah Lambert, interview by Anthony Dale, in Anthony Dale, *Crusades: Authors and Audiences* (Sydney: History Teachers' Association of New South Wales, 2007), pp. 85–97, at p. 93.

²¹ Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 9, 10, 12. See also by the same author, "Were there any Crusades in the twelfth century?", *English Historical Review*, 110 (June 1995): 553–577.

²² Augustin Fliche, "Les origines de l'action de la papauté en vue de la croisade", *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 34, no. iv (1938): 765–775; Fred E. Engreen, "Pope John the Eighth and the Arabs", *Speculum*, 20 (July 1945): 318–330; Bernard Hamilton, "Pope John X (914–928) and the Antecedents of the First Crusade", in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, ed. Iris Shagrir, Roni Ellenblum, Jonathan Simon Christopher Riley-Smith [Crusades, Subsidia, volume I] (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 309–318.

"the entire body of true Christians who are to be found in the whole world".²³ Once the papacy had freed itself from German control, it assumed a leadership position in the fight with Islam, first in Sicily and then in Spain.²⁴ The pivotal event that set crusading in motion, according to Fliche, was the oath of Robert Guiscard (d. c. 1085) to Pope Nicholas II (r. 1058–1061) at the Council of Melfi (August 1059), which simultaneously emancipated the papacy from Germany and launched the Norman–papal plan for the conquest of Islamic Sicily.²⁵

Christopher Dawson never directly questioned the 1095 starting date for the Crusades,²⁶ but by defining the Crusades as "international enterprises against the common enemies of Christendom" that were a direct product of the new European "internationalism" arising out of "the universal order of the Church" and "the international authority of the Papacy" established by "the reforming movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries",²⁷ he set the Crusades free from their 1095 moorings and linked them to "the most general and intensive social earthquake Europe has ever seen",²⁸ the Papal Revolution. The principle out of which the Papal Revolution was founded was "the freedom of the Church" (*libertas ecclesiae*). We cannot understand the full dimensions of the Papal Revolution – particularly the revolutionary changes this seismic event had on Europe's international relations with Islam – unless we understand the term "church" as it was used in the slogan of the Papal Revolution, "the freedom of the Church".

Here, "Church" refers to both a human and an institutional entity.²⁹ It is the Church of popes, prelates, and priors, as well as the Church at large,

²³ Alfonso X el Sabio, or the Learned, King of Castile, *Las Siete partidas*, ed. Robert I. Burns; trans. Samuel Parsons Scott, volumes I–V (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), I: 156 (I.x.1). This is one of three different ways in which the term "church" is to be understood, according to Alfonso. The term may also denote "a holy place surrounded by walls and covered above, where Christians assemble to hear the service, and pray to God to pardon their sins", and it may also be used in a specialised way to describe "all the prelates and clergy of any place who are devoted to the service of God in the Holy Church".

²⁴ Fliche, "Origines", 772. See also Augustin Fliche, *Histoire du Moyen Age*, volume 2: *L'Europe occidentale de 888 à 1125* [Histoire générale, pub. sous la direction de Gustave Glotz] (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1930), pp. 546–548; *idem*, review of Erdmann, *Entstehung*, in *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France*, 23 (1937): 58–65, at 61; *idem*, *Réforme grégorienne*, 48–53.

²⁵ Fliche, "Origines", 772. Fliche confuses Melfi, in the district of Apulia, with Amalfi, near Salerno and Naples. Fliche's scholarship on the Crusades was widely respected by Crusade historians, but his thesis that the Crusades began with the Norman conquest of Islamic Sicily was simply ignored. See Marshall W. Baldwin, "Some recent interpretations of Pope Urban II's Eastern policy", *Catholic Historical Review*, 25 (January 1940): 459–466; Brett Edward Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 34.

²⁶ Christopher Dawson did, by mistake, assign Pope Urban's proclamation of the Jerusalem Crusade at the Council of Clermont in 1095 to the year 1093 in his book *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1950), p. 177.

²⁷ Christopher Dawson, "Europe and the seven stages of Western culture", in *Christianity and European Culture: Selections from the Work of Christopher Dawson*, ed. Gerald J. Russell (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), pp. 132–151, at p. 141.

²⁸ Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (New York: W. Morrow, 1938; reprint, Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993), p. 530.

²⁹ For a definition of "church" as both a human and an institutional entity, see note 23 (above) and related text. The notion that all mankind was represented in the Church and that the Church had responsibility for the care and governance of this "kingdom" (Luke 22:29) finds artistic expression in the programme of mural paintings in the Cluniac chapel of Berzé-la-Ville in Burgundy, France, dating from the early twelfth century. On this chapel and its remarkable frescoes, see Éric Palazzo, "L'iconographie des fresques de Berzé-la-Ville dans le contexte de la réforme grégorienne et de la liturgie

Christian society itself. Within Christian Europe, “the freedom of the Church” meant the complete freedom of the Church from imperial, royal, and feudal domination.³⁰ In the realms of Christendom that had been conquered by Islam and subjected to Islamic rule, “the freedom of the Church” meant the return of Christian rule and the “[restoration of] the former position of the Holy Church” (*antiquum ecclesie sancte statum . . . reparavit*).³¹ These objectives first began to be realised in 1059 when the Norman–papal alliance inaugurated at Melfi created a new political foundation based upon the sovereignty and independence of the two contracting parties to the agreement and established the principle of “the freedom of the Church” by the *de facto* exercise of sovereignty by the papacy and by the papal installation of a Christian prince as sovereign over lands lost to Islam by Christendom.³² Concrete efforts to attain “the freedom of the Church” in the

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clunisiennne”, *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*, 19 (1988): 169–186; Yves Christie, “À propos des peintures de Berzé-la-Ville”, *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 44 (1996): 77–84; Jean-Claude Bonne, “Temporum concordia discors: Le temps dans les peintures murales romanes de Berzé-la-Ville”, in *Metamorphosen der Zeit*, ed. Éric Alliez (Munich: W. Fink, 1999), pp. 145–175; Daniel Russo, “Espace peint, espace symbolique, construction ecclésiologique: les peintures de Berzé-la-Ville (Chapelle-des-Moines)”, *Revue Mabillon: Revue internationale d'histoire et de littérature religieuses*, n.s., 11 (2000): 57–87; Elizabeth Lapina, “The paintings of Berzé-la-Ville in the context of the First Crusade and the Reconquista”, *Journal of Medieval History*, 31 (December 2005): 309–326.

³⁰ Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 50, 51, 83, 87, 94, 103–104, 108.

³¹ Urban II to Bishop Gerland of Agrigento (d. 1101), 10 October 1098; Paolo Collura, ed., *Le più antiche carte dell'Archivio capitolare di Agrigento (1092–1282)* (Palermo: U. Manfredi, 1961), p. 22, no. 5; Becker, *Papst Urban II*, II: 349–351; Chevedden, “Islamic view”, 192–193. For a discussion of the meaning of *libertas ecclesiae* and its explicit formulation in Canon 2 of the Council of Clermont (1095), see Chevedden, “Goal of the Eastern Crusade”, 58–71, 86–103.

³² For the foundation charter of the Norman–papal alliance, the 1059 oath of Robert Guiscard to Pope Nicholas II, see *Le liber censuum de l'église romaine*, ed. Paul Fabre and Louis Duchesne, volumes I–III (Paris: Fontemoing, Thorin, 1889–1952), I: 422. The text of this oath is also found in *Die Kanonessammlung des Kardinals Deusdedit*, 1: *Die Kanonessammlung selbst*, ed. Victor Wolf von Glanvell (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1905; reprint, Aalen: Scientia-Verlag, 1967), pp. 393–394, no. 285 (157), but the editor incorrectly considers the renewal of the oath in 1080 as the original, and, consequently, italicises the variant readings of the charter of 1059 under the erroneous assumption that they are additions made by Deusdedit. See Paul Fridolin Kehr, *Die Belehungen der süditalienischen Normannenfürsten durch die Päpste (1059–1192)* [Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, volume I] (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften/Walter de Gruyter, 1934), pp. 21–24. For translations of this oath, see Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300: With Selected Documents* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press/Medieval Academy of America, 1988), p. 44; John Julius Norwich, *The Normans in Sicily: The Normans in the South, 1016–1130*, and *The Kingdom in the Sun, 1130–1194* (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 128–129; Graham A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow, UK: Longman, 2000), pp. 188–189. On the Council of Melfi and the 1059 oath, see William of Apulia, *La geste de Robert Guiscard*, ed. Marguerite Mathieu (Palermo: Istituto siciliano di studi bizantini e neoellenici, 1961), p. 154 (II: 400–405); Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 121; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 133; Josef Deér, *Papsttum und Normannen: Untersuchungen zu ihren lehnsrechtlichen und kirchenpolitischen Beziehungen* [Studien und Quellen zur Welt Kaiser Friedrichs II, volume I] (Köln: Böhlau, 1972), pp. 51–106; Berman, *Law and Revolution*, 411–412; Ian S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073–1198: Continuity and Innovation* [Cambridge Medieval Textbooks] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 369–370; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 186–194; *idem*, “The papacy and the rulers of southern Italy, 1058–1198”, in *The Society of Norman Italy*, ed. Graham A. Loud and Alex Metcalfe [The Medieval Mediterranean, volume XXXVIII] (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 151–184; *idem*, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 137–138; Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler between East and West*, trans. Graham A. Loud and Diane Milburn [Cambridge

realms of conquered Christendom soon followed. These were "the foreign wars of the Papal Revolution",³³ better known as the Crusades.

The popular conception of the Crusades versus the Varronic conception of the Crusades

The alternative histories of the Crusades advanced by French, Spanish, and English scholars are practically forgotten today. Even Tyerman's unorthodox history of the Crusades, published a decade ago, is now brushed aside because he has re-embraced the popular image of the Crusades that accepts Pope Urban as the founding father of the crusading movement and 1095 as its starting-point.³⁴ Contemporary scholarship on the Crusades would have us believe that the field of Crusade history is mired in a debate among "traditionalists", "pluralists", "popularists", and "generalists".³⁵ Whereas, in fact, there is only one school of Crusade studies: that of the "popularists", representing those scholars that embrace the popular notion of crusading as having originated in 1095 with Pope Urban's Jerusalem expedition. The popular notion of the Crusades is too ingrained in popular culture to be displaced, but there is no reason why scholarship should lend support to this contradictory and incoherent view of the crusading enterprise.

The popular notion of the Crusades is contradictory and incoherent because it is based upon the fallacy that crusading had a foundation in institutional structures and processes before it had a foundation in reality. The most important crusading institution, the Crusade indulgence, as well as the crusading vow, both appeared well ahead of the accepted historical schedule for the Crusades, yet the origins of the Crusades in Pope Urban's 1095 call to arms remains sacrosanct.³⁶

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Medieval Textbooks] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 10; Chevedden, "Islamic interpretation", 133–134; *idem*, "Crusade indulgence", 275–276.

³³ Berman, *Law and Revolution*, 101.

³⁴ Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom: Holy War and the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); *idem*, *The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction* [Very Short Introductions, volume CXL] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); *idem*, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (London: Allen Lane, 2006).

³⁵ Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580: From Lyons to Alcazar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 2–6; *idem*, *Contesting the Crusades*, 2–23; *idem*, with Marcus Bull, "Jonathan Riley-Smith, the Crusades and the military orders: An appreciation", in *The Experience of Crusading*, volume 1: *Western Approaches*, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1–10; Giles Constable, "The historiography of the Crusades", in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), pp. 1–22, at pp. 12–14; Andrew Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States* (Harlow, UK: Pearson/Longman, 2004), pp. 9–10; Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, 228–231; Helen Nicholson, *The Crusades* [Greenwood Guides to Historic Events of the Medieval World] (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2004), pp. xl–xli; Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, xi–xii, 102–103; *idem*, *Crusades: A History*, xxv, xxxi, xxxii, 308–309; *idem*, "Modern Approaches to the History of the Crusades", in Dale, *Crusades*, 18–25; *idem*, "Pluralism and sentient empathy", in Dale, *Crusades*, 26–31; James A. Brundage, review of Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, *Crusades*, 4 (2005): 189–191; William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095–c. 1187* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), pp. 4–5.

³⁶ On the 1063 Crusade indulgence for Spain, see note 7 (above) and notes 83, 85, and 87 (below) and related text. On the 1063 Crusade indulgence for Sicily, see notes 82 and 84 (below) and related text. On the Crusade indulgences of Pope Gregory VII (r.1073–1085) granted for the aborted Jerusalem

The emergence of the Crusade indulgence and the crusading vow prior to 1095 indicates that crusading had a foundation in institutional structures and procedures before 1095. And, prior to this development, crusading had a foundation in fact; it existed strictly by itself, independent of its institutional apparatus.

Rome's greatest scholar, Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 BCE), maintained that what is produced had to be objectively distinct from the producing thing: "As the painter is prior to the painting, and the architect prior to the building, so are the cities prior to the institutions of the cities".³⁷ Accordingly, the institutions of the Crusades were not produced prior to the Crusades; nor were they produced in union, or in conjunction, with the commencement of the Crusades; they were produced after the Crusades had been established. To paraphrase Varro, the Crusades precede the things instituted by the Crusades. The things instituted by the Crusades were the products of an activity – crusading – so that the activity that produced these things was prior to them. Long before "crusade" became a word (med. L., *cruciata*, *cruzata*, *croata*, OFr. *croisee*, Pr. *crozada*, Sp. *cruzada*, Cat. *croada*, It. *crociata*), and even before crusading wars produced their own institutional arrangements and theoretical framework, crusading was an objective human reality, a socially created fact.

Just as science preceded the term "scientist", and is independent of it, crusading preceded the term "crusader", *crucesignatus* (lit. "one signed with the cross"), and is independent of it. And just as "science preceded the theory of science, and is independent of it",³⁸ crusading preceded the theory of the Crusades, and is independent of it. Such Varronic ideas permeate the thoughts of scholars who otherwise are opposed to the view that intellect follows life rather than being driven by it. Erdmann, for example, asserts that "the crusading idea became articulate only after it had developed in real life".³⁹ Tyerman declares that "the practice of crusading fashioned the institution [of crusading], not vice versa".⁴⁰

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Crusade of 1074 and the ongoing Sicilian Crusade, see Chevedden, "Crusade indulgence", 286–294, and note 88 (below) and related text. On the Crusade indulgence of Pope Victor III (1086–1088), granted for the North African Crusade in 1087 targeting al-Mahdiyyah, the capital of Zirid Ifrīqiya, see Chevedden, "Crusade indulgence", 294–295. On the Crusade indulgence of Pope Urban II, issued in 1089 and renewed in 1096, for the Tarragona Crusade, see *ibid.*, 295–302. For a similar indulgence, issued in 1093 by the same pope, for the restoration of the monastery of San Cugat del Vallès (Sant Cugat del Vallès), which had been destroyed in 375/985 by Muḥammad Ibn Abī 'Āmir, known as al-Mansūr billāh (the Almanzor of Christian sources), see *ibid.*, 299, n. 112. On the pre-1095 crusading vow, see Lawrence J. McCrank, "Restoration and reconquest in medieval Catalonia: The Church and principality of Tarragona, 971–1177", PhD Thesis, University of Virginia, 1974, pp. 255–256, 280–281 nn. 30–34; *idem*, "The foundation of the Confraternity of Tarragona by Archbishop Oleguer", *Viator*, 9 (1978): 157–178, at 162.

³⁷ Marcus Terentius Varro, *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum*, as quoted in St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, VI.4; trans. Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), pp. 87–88. See also Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, in his *Opera omnia*, ed. Michel André, volume XXV (Paris: Vivès, 1861), p. 268 (disput. VII, sec. 2, par. 19); trans. Cyril Vollert as *On the Various Kinds of Distinctions* (*Disputationes metaphysicae, Disputatio VII, de variis distinctionum generibus*) [Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation, volume IV] (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1947), p. 54.

³⁸ Arthur James Balfour, *The Foundations of Belief: Being Notes Introductory to the Study of Theology* (New York and London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1895), p. 134.

³⁹ Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 133; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 147. Erdmann also recognises that "the theory of holy war came after its factual development" (Erdmann, 71; Baldwin and Goffart, 80).

⁴⁰ Tyerman, *Invention of the Crusades*, 24.

And Riley-Smith maintains "that, however inchoate crusading was in institutional terms, crusaders were readily identifiable".⁴¹ These statements affirm that the activity of crusading is distinct from the institutional or theoretical development of crusading and establish that the experience or practice of crusading precedes whatever is produced by crusading.

The Varronic conception of the Crusades stands at odds with the popular conception of the Crusades. Varro's position appears attractive, but a conceptual block stands in the way of its adoption: a reluctance to concentrate on the direct evidence and to take into account "what contemporaries understood by crusading".⁴² A solution to the problem of crusading origins is to be found in an assessment of the direct evidence and in an understanding of what contemporaries understood by crusading. To get a sense of what contemporaries understood by crusading, we shall examine the Norman conquest of Sicily (1060–1091) (Figure 1). Both Christian and Islamic sources see this event as the advent of a totally new era.⁴³ For the Christians, it raised the prospect of the reversal of centuries of Islamic domination and of a Christian world restored to the unity that had marked it prior to the Islamic conquest movements. For the Muslims, it provoked alarm and calls for *jihād* to counter Christian "expansion and penetration into the realms of Islam".⁴⁴ Christian and Islamic sources certainly offer different perspectives on the conquest of Sicily, but they are of one mind in their assessment of the Norman war in Sicily as part of the crusading enterprise.⁴⁵

'Alī ibn Ṭāhir al-Sulamī

A truly exceptional analysis of the Norman conquest of Sicily comes from 'Alī b. Ṭāhir al-Sulamī (d. 500/1107), a legal scholar and preacher at the Great Mosque of Damascus. Just six years after Jerusalem fell to the crusaders in 1099, he wrote a treatise entitled *Kitāb al-jihād* (The Book on Holy War), "one of the most remarkable works ever composed on this subject", in which he makes it very clear

⁴¹ Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 10.

⁴² Norman Housley has observed that "the issue of what contemporaries understood by crusading, and above all the sense they made of their crusading past, has as yet received little attention" (Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 166). The direct evidence is so inadequately studied and understood that the most authoritative piece of direct evidence pertaining to the "First" Crusade, the second canon of the Council of Clermont (1095), which is barely two lines long, has been repeatedly misread and misinterpreted by senior scholars in the field of Crusade studies. There has been no attempt by scholars in this field to focus on these two lines of Latin and ponder their meaning. For a sampling of some of the many mistranslations and misrepresentations of this important text, see Chevedden, "Goal of the Eastern Crusade", 58–65, 104–108; *idem*, "Crusade indulgence", 315–317.

⁴³ Chevedden, "Islamic view".

⁴⁴ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, volume 28, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Muḥammad Ḥilmī Muḥammad Aḥmad (Cairo: al-Hay' al-Misriyya al-'Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1992), p. 248.

⁴⁵ Others disagree with my position; cf. Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 20; Jeremy Johns, *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily: The Royal Dīwān* [Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 32–33; Alex Metcalfe, "The Muslims of Sicily under Christian Rule", in Loud and Metcalfe, *Society of Norman Italy*, 289–317, at 293–294; John France, *Crusades and the Expansion of Catholic Christendom, 1000–1714* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 28; Niall Christie, "Motivating listeners in the *Kitāb al-jihād* of 'Alī ibn Ṭāhir al-Sulamī (d. 1106)", *Crusades*, 6 (2007): 1–14, at 7.

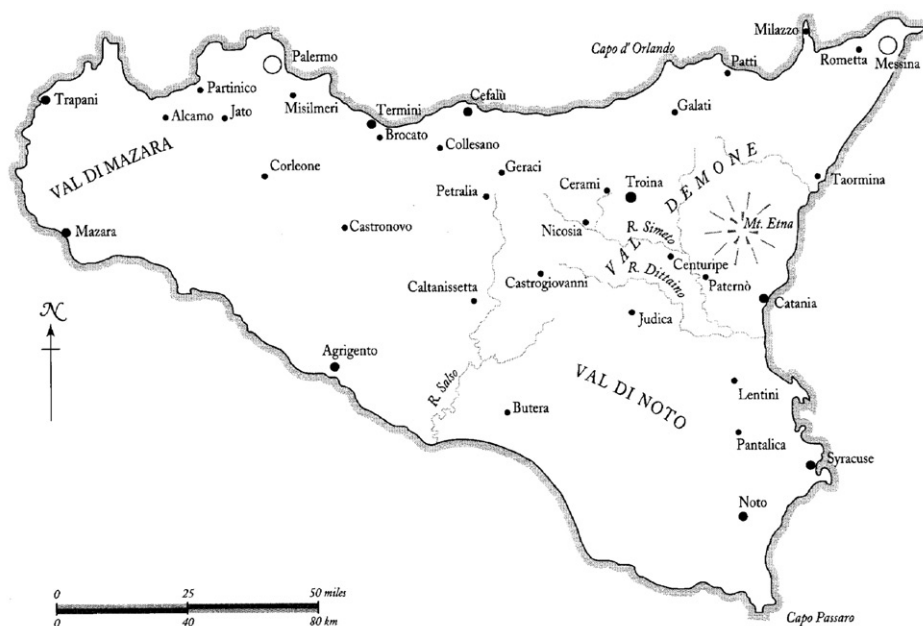


Figure 1. Sicily. From Graham Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*; reproduced with permission from Pearson Education.

that the conquest of Sicily was the first stage in a multi-part movement that culminated in the capture of Jerusalem. He presents the crusading enterprise as unfolding in three successive waves of attacks emanating from the Latin West, with each wave informing the others: first, Sicily; then Spain; and finally Syria:

A host [of Franks] swooped down upon the island of Sicily [Figure 2] at a time of division and dissension among its people, and likewise they took possession of town after town in Islamic Spain (al-Andalus). When reports mutually confirmed the condition of this country [Syria] – namely, the disagreements of its lords, the oppressive demands of its leading men, together with its disorder and disarray – they acted upon their decision to set out for it [Syria], and Jerusalem was the chief object of their desires. When they arrived in Syria, they saw divided sovereignties, conflicting opinions, and contending views, combined with hidden enmity, so that their ambitions expanded accordingly and extended to whatever their power could command. They [the Franks] continued zealously in the Holy War against the Muslims (*jihād al-muslimīn*), while the Muslims were not inclined to wage war against them and did not join forces to fight them – with each [Muslim power] expecting the other one to take up their fight [for them] – until they [the Franks] made themselves rulers of lands beyond their wildest dreams and subjected the inhabitants to destruction and degradation far beyond what they had intended. Even now they are persisting further in their efforts, avidly seeking to expand their territory. All the while, their ambition is swelling because of what appears to them to

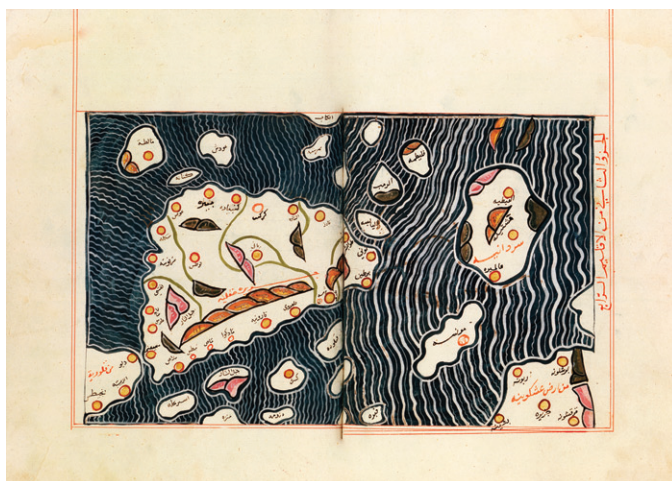


Figure 2. A map of Sicily from al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Dept. of Oriental Collections, MS Pococke 375, fols. 187b–188a. Copied by ‘Alī b. Hasan al-Hūfī l-Qāsimī and completed on 13 Shabān 960 [25 July 1553]. 19.5 × 33 cm (7.5 × 13 in). South is at the top; North is at the bottom. Left to right: The toe of Calabria, Sicily, and Sardinia. Mt. Etna, aptly captioned *Jabal al-Nār* (“the mountain of fire”), is prominently depicted near the north-east corner of Sicily. Reproduced with permission from the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

be Muslim reluctance to oppose them. Their hopes have been increased proportionate to the contentment of their enemies to be at peace with them, so that even they are convinced that all the land will be theirs, and all the people will become their prisoners. May God – Near and Responsive – in His munificence frustrate their designs by uniting the [Muslim] community and establishing order in it.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ ‘Alī ibn Tāhir al-Sulamī, *Kitāb al-jihād*, in *Arbaʿat kutub fī l-jihād min ʿasr al-hurūb al-salibiyya*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Damascus: al-Takwīn, 2007), p. 45; Emmanuel Sivan, “La genèse de la contre-croisade: Un traité damasquin de début de XII^e siècle”, *Journal asiatique*, 254 (1966): 197–224, at 207, 215–216; Peter Malcolm Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), p. 27; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 72–73; Chevedden, “Islamic interpretation”, 94; *idem*, “Islamic view”, 184–185; Niall Christie, “Jerusalem in the *Kitāb Al-Jihād* of ‘Alī ibn Tahir Al-Sulamī”, *Medieval Encounters*, 13 (2007): 209–221, at 212; Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 139 (“one of the most remarkable works ever composed on this subject”). Niall Christie maintains that al-Sulamī speaks hyperbolically of the aims of the crusaders by presenting the Jerusalem Crusade “as part of a grander scheme of conquest directed against Muslim lands” than it actually was. By “making the crusaders seem considerably more aware and systematic in their aggression against the Muslims than they actually were” and by “linking the Christian expansions together in a way that no one in Europe did”, al-Sulamī, according to Christie, portrays “the crusaders as more systematic and opportunistic than they actually were”. By “increas[ing] the magnitude of the threat [posed by the crusaders]”, al-Sulamī lays bare his true “intention”: to “effectively [frighten] his listeners into action” against the crusaders (Christie, “Motivating listeners”, 7). In short, Christie cannot credit al-Sulamī with providing an objective evaluation of crusader activities in the Mediterranean. For a synthesis of the Islamic view and the Christian view of the Crusades, see Chevedden, “Islamic view”.



Figure 3. A map of Islamic Sicily from *Kitāb gharā'ib al-funūn wa mulah al-'ayūn*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Dept. of Oriental Collections, MS Arab.c.90, fols. 32b–33a. 32.4 × 49 cm. Undated, 13th century (?). North is at the top; South is at the bottom. The usual triangular shape of the island is transformed into an oval shape, and the north-east sector of the island is transposed from its original position to the south-west side of the island (*below left*). *Top centre*, the harbour of Palermo, marked by a deep indentation. Standing sentinel on either side of the harbour are two monumental towers, each labelled *Qasr al-Silsila* (Castle of the Chain), between which was stretched a heavy chain to prevent enemy ships from entering the port. The Old City of Palermo (*qasr al-qadīm*), just south of the harbour, is depicted as a circular walled city with 11 gates. *Left*, Mt. Etna, with a chimney-like summit, spouts red lava high into the sky. It is appropriately captioned *Jabal al-Talla* (The Mountain of the Pouring [Lava]). Reproduced with permission from the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

In his innovative tripartition of the assault on the power of Islam by the Christian West, al-Sulamī is the first Muslim author to view the Mediterranean as one geo-strategic unit and to see this counter-offensive as a new contest for the control of the Mediterranean. The intra-Islamic East–West conflict that had so dominated the tenth century, evidenced by the Fatimid thrust eastward, was replaced in the eleventh century by a Christian–Islamic East–West confrontation that was also concurrently a North–South struggle in Sicily, Spain, and North Africa. Al-Sulamī registers with stunning precision the enormous shock of this turn of events. Having wielded the hammer for so many centuries, Islam was not ready to accept the role of the anvil.

In an unbroken continuity, three Mediterranean surges by the Latin West ushered in an entirely new world. The hallmark of the new age was a general movement against Islam by the Latin West known as the Crusades. The first stage of this movement, according to al-Sulamī, began when the Normans descended upon the island of Sicily (Figure 3). The second stage was reached when "town after town" in Islamic Spain fell to Christian forces. And the third stage was marked by the conquest of Jerusalem. Al-Sulamī's vision of the crusading enterprise as unfolding in three parts was elevated to canonical status in the Islamic historiographical tradition during the thirteenth century, when Ibn al-Athīr (550–630/1160–1233) adopted it in his monumental work *al-Kāmil fī l-ta'rikh*.⁴⁷ Soon after, the Jacobite historian Gregory Abū l-Faraj Bar Hebraeus (623–685/1226–1286) incorporated it into the Syriac historical tradition, thus making it part of the main historiographical tradition of the Middle East.⁴⁸

Especially noteworthy is al-Sulamī's description of crusading as a "holy war" (*jihād*) against the Muslims, indicating that he formed an understanding of the crusading enterprise through a self-understanding of his own religiously based culture and its tradition of Holy War. Whatever differences medieval Muslim jurists and Christian theologians had on Holy War, they all acknowledged that it was a war waged in the name of a civilisation conceived in terms of the values of a given religion. This does not mean that the Western form of Holy War, particularly as embodied in the Crusades, could be entirely comprehended by a people of a very different religious tradition and convention of Holy War.⁴⁹ But Muslims had some appreciation of the Western form of Holy War and were aware that Christians

⁴⁷ ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-ta'rikh*, ed. Carl J. Tornberg, volumes I–XIII (Beirut: Dār al-Sādir, 1965–1967), X: 272–273; trans. Donald S. Richards as *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fī l-ta'rikh*, part 1: *The Years 491–541/1097–1146: The Coming of the Franks and the Muslim Response* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), p. 13; Chevedden, "Islamic interpretation", 96–99; *idem*, "Islamic view", 185–186.

⁴⁸ Gregory Abū l-Faraj Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū l-Faraj*, 1: *English Translation*, trans. Ernest A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 234; *idem*, *Ta'rikh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. Aṭūn Sālīḥānī (Beirut: Maṭba'at al-Kāthūlikīyya lil-Ābā' al-Yasū'iyyīn fī Bayrūt, 1890), p. 341; Herman Teule, "The Crusaders in Barhebraeus' Syriac and Arabic chronicles", in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, Confrontations: Acta of the Congress held at Hernen Castle in May 1993*, ed. Krijnie Ciggaar, Adelbert Davids, and Herman Teule (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), pp. 39–49; Chevedden, "Islamic interpretation", 100–102, 119–121; *idem*, "Islamic view", 186–87.

⁴⁹ As John J. Saunders explains in *Aspects of the Crusades* [University of Canterbury Publications, volume III] (Christchurch, New Zealand: University of Canterbury, 1962), p. 21, "the Muslim *jihād*... aimed at *expansion* whereas the Crusades aimed at *recovery*" (italics in original). On the universal character of *jihād*, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rikh al-'allāmah Ibn Khaldūn: Kitāb al-'Ibar wa dīwān al-mubtada' wa l-khabar fī ayyām al-'Arab wa l-'Ajam wa l-Barbar wa man 'āsarahum min dhawī l-sultān al-Akbar, wa huwa ta'rikh 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn al-Maghribī*, ed. Yūsuf As'ad Dāghir, volumes I–VII (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1956–1961), I: 408; trans. Franz Rosenthal as *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*,

regarded their mode of Holy War to be religiously sanctioned and supported by God. A few Muslim authors even understood the patriotic sentiment behind crusading: the desire to recover lands that had “originally belonged to the Christians” but had been conquered by Islam and subjected to Islamic rule.⁵⁰ Al-Sulamī’s perception of the religious nature of crusading lends credence and credibility to the Norman chroniclers who are “at some pains to stress the religious nature of the struggle [for Sicily] and the overtly Christian mission of the Normans”.⁵¹

The Norman chroniclers and the Crusade in Sicily

Sicily was the seedbed of the Crusades and crusading concepts (Figure 4). This simple fact has been insufficiently appreciated by those writing on the Crusades. In Sicily, the fundamental concepts of crusading were born. Here, crusading was first perceived as fulfilling the summoning will of God and carrying out the work of God. Here, Christ was first regarded as the leader of the crusading enterprise and the centre of Crusade spirituality. Here, a newly emancipated papacy first promoted the recovery of the lost lands of Christendom through a programme of Christian reconquest (*Reconquista*) and restoration (*restauratio*). Here, the papacy first granted a Crusade indulgence and bestowed on crusaders a papal banner, indicating papal sponsorship of crusading. Here, liturgical preparations on the eve of battle reminded the crusaders that they were taking part in a religious war and fighting on behalf of Christendom. Here, crusading was first envisioned as a twofold undertaking: a *Crusade of reconquest* and a *Crusade of regenerating the Church*. So piecemeal was the introduction of these crusading concepts that their origins in the Sicilian Crusade have been obscured. As a result, the Sicilian origin of many crusading concepts has gone wholly unexplored. Fortunately, the Norman chroniclers offer a reasonably good, albeit incomplete, record of many of these concepts.

The will of God

According to the Norman chroniclers, the Normans held the conviction that their conquest of Sicily was divinely approved and had God’s support. Prior to his assault upon the island, Duke Robert Guiscard (d. c. 1085) “waited for some sign whereby he might know that this would be according to

(footnote continued)

2nd ed., volumes I–III [Bollingen Series, volume XLIII] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), I: 473.

⁵⁰ ‘Abd Allāh ibn Buluggīn al-Zirī, *Kitāb al-Tibyān lil-amīr ‘Abd Allāh ibn Buluggīn ākhir umarā’ Banī Zirī bi-Gharnāṭa*, ed. Amin Tawfiq al-Tibī [Silsilat al-Mu’tamid ibn ‘Abbād lil-Ta’rīkh al-Andalusī wa Maṣādirih, volume V] (Rabat: Manshūrāt ‘Ukāz, 1995), p. 100; trans. Amin T. Tibi as *The Tibyān: Memoirs of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Buluggīn, Last Zirid Amīr of Granada* [Medieval Iberian Peninsula, Texts and Studies, volume V] (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), p. 90. See also Abū l-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Idhārī al-Marrākushī, *al-Bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa l-Maghrib* (*Histoire de l’Espagne musulmane au XI^{ème} siècle*), volume III, ed. Évariste Lévi-Provençal (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1930), p. 282; trans. David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 250.

⁵¹ Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 163.



Figure 4. Two knights duelling. Painting in the *muqarnas* zone of the central ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, Sicily, dating from the years c. 1140 to c. 1147. Reproduced with permission from Franco Cosimo Panini Editore.

God's will".⁵² The sign soon came in the form of Muslim dissension and an invitation to join in the struggle for Sicily. The fall of the Kalbid emirate that had ruled Islamic Sicily for a century (mid-tenth to mid-eleventh century) led to the disintegration of Sicily into various principalities and ushered in a chaotic period for the island. The Muslim *qā'id* Ibn al-Ḥawwās (d. c. 458/1065) managed to rally the central portion of the island around his standard, while in the East, the *qā'id* of Syracuse, Ibn al-Thumna (d. 454/1062), captured Catania from Ibn al-Ḥawwās's brother-in-law, Ibn al-Maklātī, and seized the territory of Ibn Mankūd, the ruler of the Val di Mazara in the western portion of the island. Before long, the two rivals faced each other in battle near Castrogiovanni, and Ibn al-Thumna was defeated. Desperate for allies, Ibn al-Thumna made an alliance with the infidel Duke Robert. When Ibn al-Ḥawwās learned of this accord, he expelled Ibn al-Thumna from Sicily. The dethroned Muslim ruler then took refuge in Reggio under Robert's protection and plotted his return to power.⁵³

But the role that the Normans were content to play was not that of mercenaries to Ibn al-Thumna, as Jeremy Johns suggests.⁵⁴ They had no intention of intervening in Sicily merely "to assist in a civil war", as Alex Metcalfe contends.⁵⁵

⁵² Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni di Amato di Montecassino volgarizzata in antico francese*, ed. Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis [Fonti per la storia d'Italia, pubblicate dall' Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, Scrittori, Secolo XI, volume LXXVII] (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1935), p. 229 (V.7); trans. Prescott N. Dunbar as *The History of the Normans*, rev. Graham A. Loud (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2004), p. 136.

⁵³ Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, 229–230 (V.8); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 136.

⁵⁴ Johns, *Arabic Administration*, 32–33.

⁵⁵ Metcalfe, "Muslims of Sicily", 289.

In 1059, when Robert Guiscard took the title “future Duke of Sicily” (*dux... futurus Sicilie*) at the Council of Melfi, it was well understood that conquest, not mercenary service, is what the Normans had in mind.⁵⁶

Duke Robert interpreted the convulsions fragmenting Sicily as “hav[ing] happened through God’s ordinance”. Desiring to be in partnership with God and with his ordinance, “he prepared to take Sicily... [and] called upon the Normans to go into Sicily in order to drive out the Saracens, who had taken the island from Christian hands”.⁵⁷ Since there was no discrepancy between God’s will and the will of Duke Robert and that of his brother Count Roger d’Hauteville (d. 1101), waging war became a God-directed activity. Robert “invoked divine assistance” as Muslim warships assembled in the Strait of Messina to block the passage of the Norman invasion fleet, and “the duke and his brother both vowed that if the land should be handed over to them with divine help, they would in turn devote themselves more completely to God, keeping in mind, with firm faith, what is written: ‘Accept God’s assistance for yourself in all matters, and you will prosper’”.⁵⁸

Long before “God wills it!” (*Deus vult!*) became the battle cry of the Crusades, the summoning will of God had “moved the will of the Normans as well as of others to join with [Duke Robert]”⁵⁹ in the conquest of Sicily. By answering God’s summons and participating in the Crusade, Christian warriors enlisted in a divinely sanctioned endeavour and could expect to receive divine support. They were not to be disappointed. Geoffrey Malaterra (fl. 1097) recounts that at the critical Battle of Cerami in 1063 St. George appeared, “magnificent in his armor, mounted on a white horse and carrying a white standard with a splendid cross on it tied to the tip of his lance”. He led the crusaders in battle, “so as to make our men more confident and ready to fight”, and provoked such jubilation on the part of the Norman soldiers that “they called out again and again, ‘God and St. George’” (Figure 5). Malaterra also makes a reference to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 (“by this sign you shall conquer”) in the mention of “a banner containing a cross hanging from the top of [Count Roger]’s lance, a banner which only God could have placed there”.⁶⁰ These extraordinary happenings do not survive serious analysis, yet they clearly show that crusading encouraged a thirst for miracles.

During the course of the Jerusalem Crusade, saintly warriors were to take centre stage. In January 1098, during the crusader siege of Antioch (21 October 1097 to 3 June 1098), the patriarch of Jerusalem and other bishops spoke of the crusader army as being under the protection of St. George, St. Theodore, St. Demetrius,

⁵⁶ See notes 32 and 77 and related text; Loud, *Latin Church*, 138. According to Malaterra, the Norman urge to conquer Sicily was evident in 1053, when, in the aftermath of the Battle of Civitate, Pope Leo IX “conceded to [the Normans] all the land that they had conquered – as well as any that they might acquire in the future in the regions of Calabria and Sicily”: Geoffrey Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius*, ed. Ernesto Pontieri [Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, volume V, i, fasc. 211, 218, 219] (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1927–1928), p. 15 (I.14); trans. Kenneth Baxter Wolf as *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 62.

⁵⁷ Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de’ Normanni*, 231 (V.9); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 136.

⁵⁸ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 32 (II.9); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 90.

⁵⁹ Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de’ Normanni*, 224 (V.4); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 133.

⁶⁰ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 44 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 109–10; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 163–164.



Figure 5. The Norman tympanum over the south door of the Church of St. George at Fordington in Dorset, England. St. George is depicted impaling an enemy soldier with the butt of his lance, which carries a large gonfalon with a lengthwise plain cross and three tapering tails. Often associated with St. George's miraculous intervention at the Battle of Antioch on 28 June 1098 during the First Crusade, this relief may commemorate the appearance of St. George at the Battle of Cerami in 1063, or, more likely, blend together various "appearances" of St. George during the early Crusades. Photograph from the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

and St. Blaise.⁶¹ Later that year, in a pitched battle on the outskirts of Antioch between the crusaders and a Muslim army under Kerbogha, the *atabeg* of Mosul, a heavenly army is said to have aided the crusaders, led by various combinations of warrior-saints. The anonymous author of the *Gesta francorum* speaks of St. George, St. Mercurius, and St. Demetrius, as does Baldric of Dol and Guibert of Nogent.⁶² Robert of Reims mentions St. George, St. Maurice,

⁶¹ The patriarch of Jerusalem and other bishops to the Churches in the West, January 1098; Hagenmeyer, *Epistulae et chartae*, 69, 147, 271–272.

⁶² *Gesta francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum: The Deeds of the Franks and other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. Rosalind Hill (London and New York: T. Nelson, 1962), p. 69; Baudri de Bourgueil/Baldric of Dol,

St. Mercurius, and St. Demetrius,⁶³ while Peter Tudebode makes reference to St. George, St. Demetrius, and St. Theodore.⁶⁴ Even though Malaterra may not have composed his history until after 1098, it is doubtful that a canonical “First” Crusade narrative served as the source for his account of the Battle of Cerami. A theory of literary relationship between Malaterra and the chroniclers of the First Crusade is hard to square with the very substantial differences between Malaterra’s description of events and those presented by historians of the First Crusade. At Cerami, St. George makes a lone appearance, while at Antioch he is joined by other warrior-saints and a heavenly army. In addition, Malaterra includes another miraculous event at Cerami that is entirely missing from the battlefield at Antioch: the appearance of a Constantinian-like banner on Count Roger’s lance.⁶⁵

The miraculous powers of God are also on display in the *History* of Amatus of Montecassino (b. c. 1010). Following the conquest of Palermo in January 1072, the Cathedral Church of St. Mary, which had been used as a mosque during the Muslim occupation of the city, was restored and reconsecrated. At the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist rededicating the cathedral, a choir of angels appeared and sang “many sweet songs of praise to God”. As this was happening, a heavenly light shone within the church.⁶⁶ The liturgical drama of the rededication of the cathedral had produced a miracle, but Amatus considers the greatest miracle to be the unexpected miracle of Norman success itself. This miracle was not ascribable to human power, but to divine power, revealing itself in “the glorious triumphs of the Normans”.⁶⁷

The work of God

Above all, the Crusade was considered to be the work of God. From the very beginning, Duke Robert had no doubts that his enterprise in Sicily coincided with God’s enterprise. After Messina was captured, Amatus recounts that Robert

ordered all the Normans to go and bear witness that his battle was the work of God, since God had given the small force of knights whom he had sent the strength to follow the path of courage, and had handed over the city “from which we shall be able to harry all the pagans”.⁶⁸

(footnote continued)

“Historia Jerosolymitana”, in *Recueil des historiens des Croisades: Historiens occidentaux*, ed. Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres, volumes 1–V (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1844–1895), IV: 77, 96 (hereafter *RHC Occ.*); Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos et cinq autres texts*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens [Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, volume CXXVII A] (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), p. 240 (VI.204).

⁶³ Robert of Reims/the Monk, “Historia Iherosolimitana”, in *RHC Occ.*, III: 796–797, 830, 832, 835.

⁶⁴ Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, ed. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill [Documents relatifs à l’histoire des croisades, volume XII] (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1977), pp. 100, 112. For a full discussion of the intercession of warrior-saints at Antioch, see James B. MacGregor, “Negotiating knightly piety: The cult of the warrior-saints in the West, ca. 1070–ca. 1200”, *Church History*, 73 (June 2004): 317–345, at 324–332.

⁶⁵ On this matter, Graham Loud concludes that “the actual texts [of Malaterra and the “First” Crusade chroniclers] must surely have been independent of each other” (Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 164).

⁶⁶ Amatus, *Storia de’ Normanni*, 282–283 (VI.19–20); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 158.

⁶⁷ Amatus, 180 (IV.1); trans. Dunbar, 111.

⁶⁸ Amatus, 237 (V.18); trans. Dunbar, 139.



Figure 6. Prosper Lafaye (1806–1883), *Combat de Céramo en Sicile, 1061, victoire de Roger I^{er} de Sicile sur 35,000 Sarrasins*, c. 1838. Oil on canvas, 71 × 79 cm; Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles, France. Roger de Hauteville is depicted at the Battle of Cerami (1063) unhorsing a Muslim warrior with a single blow of his battle-axe. Whether from a pan-Gallic sense of “French” identity, or by reason of a broader view of the crusading enterprise, the decision to include this painting in the Salle des Croisades at Versailles is a rare nineteenth-century acknowledgement that the Norman war in Sicily was a genuine Crusade. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

Norman successes on the battlefield were attributed to God. Duke Robert tells King Henry IV (r. 1056–1105), “Almighty God has glorified me with victory, subjugated the land which was oppressed by a cruel power and made me greater than any of my men”.⁶⁹ Count Roger was just as exuberant. Following the battle of Cerami (Figure 6), Malaterra reports that “the count was grateful for the benefits bestowed upon him by God and St. Peter, aware of the fact that he had won this great triumph through their patronage”.⁷⁰ At the end of the Crusade, Roger acknowledged that the whole of Sicily had been subjected to his dominion “as a result of divine will”.⁷¹

The inevitable corollary of divine favour being showered on Duke Robert and Count Roger was that their enemies would be the recipients of divine judgement. When Roger attacked Syracuse with his fleet in May 1086, the *amīr* of the city, Ibn al-Ward, went to a watery grave “under the weight of his armor”, as he tried to jump onto a neighbouring vessel to escape “the menacing sword of the count”. Malaterra’s eulogy for the drowned *amīr* seems to reflect the mood of the age: “By a

⁶⁹ Amatus, 321 (VII.27); trans. Dunbar, 179.

⁷⁰ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 44–45 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 111.

⁷¹ Malaterra, 88–89 (IV.7); trans. Wolf, 182.

divine judgment he was punished in retribution, appropriately recompensed for the injury that he had arrogantly inflicted on God".⁷²

Christ as leader of the Crusade

Christ was the leader of the Crusade. This theme is underscored in the pre-battle speeches of Duke Robert and Count Roger. Robert told his troops before the Battle of Castrogiovanni in 1061: "Have no fear, for we have Jesus Christ with us". When the battle was joined, Amatus relates that "God fought for the army of Christian Normans. He saved them and confounded and destroyed the infidels".⁷³ Count Roger exhorted his army before the Battle of Cerami with these words: "There is no room for any doubt: it is certain that, with God leading us, the enemy will not be able to stand before us".⁷⁴ Before the city of Palermo, he sounded the same theme: "Christ makes difficult work easy. Trust in His leadership, let's put an end to this conflict, and all hurry to storm the city!"⁷⁵ Riley-Smith contends that "the idea of fighting for God or Christ... had first been used by papal propagandists in rather a confused way alongside the concept of the *servitium s. Petri* in the 1070s" and did not come into prominence until the time of the "First" Crusade, but the Norman historians quite clearly indicate otherwise.⁷⁶

Papal participation

After Christ, there was the pope. Pope Nicholas II (r. 1059–1061) laid the foundations for the Sicilian Crusade at the Council of Melfi (August 1059) when he entered into a political alliance with the Normans. Through this alliance, a policy to engage in the recovery of Christendom was formulated and its successful implementation was a product of the partnership that had emerged between the Normans and the papacy. Robert Guiscard swore "fealty" to the pope and received in return authorisation that granted him legitimacy to the rights of jurisdiction over Islamic Sicily as a "vassal" of the Holy See: "I, Robert, by the grace of God and St. Peter, Duke of Apulia and Calabria, and in the future, with their help, Duke of Sicily, shall be from this time forth faithful to the Holy Roman Church and the Apostolic See, and to you my lord Pope Nicholas".⁷⁷ The force of this declaration rests entirely on "God and St. Peter", who are invoked to extend Norman sovereignty over Islamic Sicily.

This oath may be viewed as the foundation charter of the Crusades because it provides the foundation for a new system of governance in Sicily – the return of Christian rule to the island and the restoration of the Sicilian Church. The formation of new governments (*translatio regni*) was the business of the crusading enterprise: "subjugat[ing] the land which was oppressed by a cruel power" and installing a Christian regime. The whole point of the Crusades lay not in ending

⁷² Malaterra, 85–86 (IV.2); trans. Wolf, 177–178.

⁷³ Amatus, *Storia de' Normanni*, 241–242 (V.23); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 141.

⁷⁴ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 43–44 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 109.

⁷⁵ William of Apulia, *La geste de Robert*, 180 (III.294); trans. Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 163.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The First Crusade and St. Peter", in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem presented to Joshua Prawer*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar, Hans Eberhard Mayer, and R.C. Smail (Jerusalem: Yad Ishak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), pp. 41–63, at p. 58.

⁷⁷ See note 32 (above) and related text.

Islamic rule, but in re-establishing Christian rule. Decades before Pope Urban II began to conceptualise the Crusades as a *translatio regni* and well before he used *ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei* to express the goal of the Jerusalem Crusade,⁷⁸ the Church had given official support to a *translatio regni* and had embraced the principle of "the freedom of the Church" by promoting policies and initiatives aimed at reversing centuries of Islamic domination and "restor[ing] the Christian [Churches] to their former freedom".⁷⁹

The Crusades are said to have begun in 1095, but their true foundation was laid in 1059 at the Council of Melfi, which in effect established the principle of "the freedom of the Church" by an act of *de facto* sovereignty that brought into existence other sovereignties. The Church of Rome not only asserted its own autonomy by establishing independent political relations with another power, the Normans of southern Italy, but also recognised Norman sovereignty and declared that Christianity now had sovereignty over Sicily. The Papal Revolution, by championing the right of self-government (for the Church and other polities), opened the floodgates to the emergence of new sovereignties both within Europe and in the former realms of Christendom. The truly revolutionary element in crusading was the act of constituting new governments (*translatio regni*). This set the stage for an entirely new world and laid the groundwork for building new political societies in the lands that had been lost to Islamic Holy War.

By conferring legitimacy and legal sanction on the recovery of lost Christian territory and by endorsing a policy of restoring "the former position of the Holy Church", the papacy, in 1059, institutionalised crusading. The institutionalisation of crusading was a long-drawn-out, piecemeal process, which did not at first entail any radical change in the existing mode of Christian Holy War. It began first with the sanctioning of crusading deeds – the Norman conquest of Sicily – followed by the granting of an incentive, or stimulus to action, to participate in the Sicilian Crusade (see "The Crusade indulgence", below). Once sanctioned and rewarded, crusading would undergo a process of diversification and further institutionalisation. Crusading diversified into a variety of enterprises, and new procedures and prerogatives were introduced bit by bit and integrated over time so that eventually the institutional elements became a standard repertoire of indulgence, vow, Cross, and privileges. The institutionalisation of crusading compelled theoretical formulations of the enterprise and a biblical warrant for it. Accordingly, Pope Urban II adopted the formula *ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei* to express the aim of crusading and developed a fourfold schema of Christian history to explain how crusading had emerged, based upon the biblical concept of *translatio regni*. For

⁷⁸ Pope Urban both conceptualises the Crusades as a *translatio regni* and defines the crusading enterprise by its purpose – "to liberate the Church of God" (*ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei*) – thereby making fully explicit what had been implicit and intuitive before. See *Councils of Urban II*, ed. Somerville, 74; Becker, *Papst Urban II*, II: 341–362, 369–374; *idem*, "Urban II et l'Orient", 135–136; Ingrid Heike Ringel, "*Ipse transfert regna et mutat tempora*. Bemerkungen zur Herkunft von Dan. 2,21 bei Urban II", in *Deus Qui Mutat Tempora. Menschen und Institutionen im Wandel des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Alfons Becker zu seinem fünfundsiebzehnten Geburtstag*, ed. Ernst-Dieter Hehl, Hubertus Seibert, and Franz Staab (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1987), pp. 137–156; Chevedden, "Islamic view", 191–198; Chevedden, "From Crusading Facts".

⁷⁹ Urban II to the monks of Vallombrosa, 7 October 1096; *Papsturkunden für Kirchen im Heiligen Lande*, ed. Rudolf Hiestand [Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 3rd ser., volume CXXXVI; Vorarbeiten zum oriens pontificius, volume III] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), p. 89, no. 2.

Urban, the Crusades enshrined the very principle of *translatio regni*, the transfer of power from Islam to Christianity, and political reality seemed to confirm it more and more.

1059 was the start of the Crusades, and the Norman–papal alliance was the cauldron from whence crusading emerged. This alliance was the first in a series of bilateral partnerships that linked the religious and secular spheres of Western Christendom in a common enterprise: the reconquest of former Christian territory and the assimilation of this territory back into Christendom.⁸⁰ From 1059 onward, the war with Islam would be approached in new and different ways. The Church, now being able to make freedom the goal and purpose of its actions, set about to establish effective coalitions “to liberate the Church of God” from Islamic domination. The Church did not value personal salvation over the common good of Christian society, but instead insisted that “the freedom of the Church” had to be realised in the world. This was a cause that proved irresistibly attractive to the peoples of the Latin West, who wanted to break Islam’s hold on the Mediterranean and restore Christianity to its former position of prominence.

The Crusade indulgence

As a sign of papal sponsorship of the Sicilian Crusade and acceptance of papal overlordship, Roger sent “four of the camels that had fallen to him as part of his spoils [from the Battle of Cerami] to Rome as a gift for Pope Alexander [II]”.⁸¹ In return, the pope granted “the count and to all others who were helping him to win Sicily from the pagans and to hold it forever in the faith of Christ” the highest and most prized reward: “absolution of their sins” (*absolutionem de offensis*), the prerequisite for salvation. The text of the Crusade indulgence that Pope Alexander II (r. 1061–1073) sent to the Normans does not survive, but Malaterra’s account of it indicates that it was a carefully rendered plenary indulgence:

The pope . . . sent to the count and to all others who were helping him to win Sicily from the pagans and to hold it forever in the faith of Christ both his apostolic blessing and – by the powers vested in him – absolution of their sins, provided that they repent and avoid sinning in the future.⁸²

Indulgences arose out of the penitential system of the Church and served to mitigate the severity of the Church’s penitential discipline. Some of the terms that were first used to designate indulgences – *absolutio*, *relaxatio*, *remissio*, as well as *indulgentia*, of sins – had also been applied to grants of absolution (*absolutio*),

⁸⁰ On the bilateral nature of the papal relationship with the Normans, see Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 190; *idem*, “Papacy and the rulers of southern Italy”, 158; *idem*, *Latin Church*, 523.

⁸¹ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 44–45 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 111; Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 123; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 135–36; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 164; Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 20. On the presentation of spoils as a sign of overlordship, see Graham A. Loud, “Coinage, wealth and plunder in the age of Robert Guiscard”, *English Historical Review*, 114 (September 1999): 815–843, at 826; Timothy Reuter, “Plunder and tribute in the Carolingian Empire”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 35 (1985): 75–94, at 85.

⁸² Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 44–45 (II.33): “*Apostolicus . . . benedictionem apostolicam et, potestate qua utebatur, absolutionem de offensis, si respicientes in futurum caveant, comiti et omnibus, qui in lucranda de paganis Sicilia et lucratam in perpetuum ad fidem Christi retinendo auxiliarentur, mandar*”.

which petitioned God to remit sins. Indulgences, however, did not request that sins be remitted; they declared sins remitted, provided the sinner perform all of the conditions for gaining the indulgence. Malaterra leaves no doubt that sins have been declared remitted, for he indicates that "the count and all others who were helping him to win Sicily from the pagans" received a communication from the pope that granted them "absolution of their sins" (*Apostolicus... absolutionem de offensis... comiti et omnibus, qui in lucranda de paganis Sicilia... mandat*). The pope pronounced their sins absolved "by the powers vested in him" (*potestate qua utebatur*), implying that the warrant for this grant rested on the Power of the Keys (*potestas clavium*) to bind and to loosen in heaven as well as on earth (Matt. 16:19, 18:18) and on the power to forgive sins (John 20:23).

The requirements for gaining the indulgence were: the performance of the indulgenced work, repentance, and the avoidance of sin in the future. The verb *resipisco*, literally meaning "to recover one's senses" and translated here as "repent", conveys far more than mere sorrow for sin; it encompasses all of the acts of the penitent, including, and most importantly, sacramental confession. The near-contemporary Crusade indulgence granted by Pope Alexander II to Christian warriors setting off on Crusade to Spain specifically mentions the requirement of sacramental confession: "Let each one [going to Islamic Spain] confess [*confiteatur*], according to the character of his sins, to his bishop or spiritual father, and let the confessor impose a suitable penance [*modus penitentiae imponatur*] upon him".⁸³ Hence, to acquire a Crusade indulgence, one must perform the prescribed work for gaining the indulgence, receive the sacrament of Penance, and adopt the proper disposition of spirit that leads to the avoidance of sin.

Eighty-five years ago, Horace Mann identified the *absolutio* conferred by Alexander II on those helping "to win Sicily from the pagans" as "a plenary indulgence", and Nikolaus Paulus and Carl Erdmann regarded this grant as virtually identical to the Spanish Crusade indulgence.⁸⁴ The Spanish Crusade indulgence articulates the steps or stages of the indulgence rite as follows: (1) auricular confession (*confiteatur*); (2) the imposition of penance (*penitentiae imponatur*); (3) the remission of penance (*penitentiam eis levamus*); and, finally (4) the remission of sins (*remissionem peccatorum facimus*).⁸⁵ Malaterra's account of the Sicilian Crusade indulgence is far less detailed than the text of the Spanish Crusade indulgence. Whether this reflects the actual text of the Sicilian Crusade indulgence is impossible to know, but what does seem clear is that the practice of Crusade indulgences under Pope Alexander II was the same in Sicily as it was in Spain, regardless of the actual wording of the indulgence. We can therefore be fairly certain that the indulgence rite outlined in the text of the Spanish Crusade indulgence also applied to Sicily.

Unlike the Holy War indulgence, which was granted only to the dead, the Crusade indulgence, of which Alexander II's Sicilian and Spanish indulgences are our earliest examples, was granted both to the living and the dead. But like the Holy War indulgence, the Crusade indulgence was bestowed on its recipients by

⁸³ See note 7, above, and accompanying text.

⁸⁴ Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages*, volume 6: *The Popes of the Gregorian Renaissance: St. Leo IX to Honorius II, 1049–1130*, part 1: 1049–1073 (London: K. Paul, 1925), p. 307; Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses*, I: 134; Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 123, 125; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 135, 139; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 164; Chevedden, "Crusade indulgence", 282–283.

⁸⁵ See note 7, above, and related text.

virtue of apostolic authority.⁸⁶ Both the Crusade indulgence for Sicily and the Crusade indulgence for Spain make implicit reference to the Power of the Keys. Malaterra's free rendering of the Sicilian indulgence uses the phrase "by the powers vested in him" (*potestate qua utebatur*), while the Spanish indulgence uses the expression "by the authority of the holy apostles Peter and Paul" (*auctoritate sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli*).⁸⁷ The points of similarity that exist between the Sicilian and the Spanish Crusade indulgences indicate that they were essentially alike.

In 1076, Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073–1085) issued his own Crusade indulgence for Sicily. It came in the form of a papal order to Archbishop Arnald of Acerenza that he grant Count Roger a remission of his sins and do the same for "his knights who [were] about to fight with him against the pagans" in Sicily. The pope commands the archbishop to

go to him [Count Roger], and . . . if he shall be willing to obey us as he has promised, and, if he shall receive the sacrament of Penance [lit. "if he shall do penance"] dealing with every bond of his sins, as befits a Christian, you should entirely absolve both him and also his knights, who are about to fight with him against the pagans [in Sicily], from their sins, provided, however, that they [i.e. his knights] receive the sacrament of Penance [lit. "that they do penance"]. We add, furthermore, that you should admonish him with godly admonition that he keep himself from capital offences and that he seek to spread the worship of the Christian name amongst the pagans that he may deserve to obtain victory over these enemies.⁸⁸

Like the earlier Crusade indulgences for Sicily and Spain, Gregory VII's 1076 grant of indulgence is bestowed both on the living and the dead. Its requirements are the performance of the indulgenced work – "to fight with [Count Roger] against the pagans [in Sicily]" – sacramental confession, and a proper disposition of spirit that leads Roger to "keep himself from capital offences" and "spread the worship of the Christian name amongst the pagans". A continuity of links joins Pope Alexander II's Crusade indulgences for Sicily and Spain to Pope Gregory VII's Crusade indulgence for Sicily, and these indulgenced grants are themselves joined to a chain

⁸⁶ On the Holy War indulgence, see Chevedden, "Crusade indulgence", 260–268, 281, 313–315, 318. The Holy War indulgence issued by Pope John VIII (r. 872–882) in 878 makes explicit reference to the Power of the Keys: "by the intercession of St. Peter the Apostle, who has the power of binding and loosing in heaven and on earth" ("*intercessione beati Petri apostoli, cuius potestas ligandi atque solvendi est in caelo et in terra*").

⁸⁷ See note 7, above, and accompanying text.

⁸⁸ Gregory VII to Archbishop Arnald of Acerenza, 14 March 1076; Gregory VII, *Das Register Gregors VII*, ed. Erich Caspar [Monumenta Germaniae historica. Epistolae selectae, volume II] (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), pp. 271–272, no. 3.11; trans. H.E.J. Cowdrey as *The Register of Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085: An English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 193–194, no. 3.11; Chevedden, "Crusade indulgence", 292–294. This translation is based on Cowdrey's rendition, but with substantial alterations.

of indulgenced Crusades that spread from Sicily to Spain to North Africa and, by the end of the eleventh century, to the eastern Mediterranean.⁸⁹

The practice of Crusade indulgences grew out of the experience and practice of crusading. And it is this experience and practice of crusading, rather than the institutional apparatus of the Crusades, which provides the best evidence for crusading. Even so, Pope Alexander II's Crusade indulgences for Sicily and Spain furnish the earliest *a posteriori* proof of the existence of crusading. Once the practice of Crusade indulgences was introduced, it spread rapidly, eventually becoming universal and obligatory. Extant examples of eleventh-century indulgences-of-Crusade may not tell the full story. Pope Urban II, for example, bestowed the Crusade indulgence on a wide range of enterprises: the expedition "to liberate the Churches of the East" (*ad liberationem Orientalium ecclesiarum*),⁹⁰ the campaign to rebuild Tarragona, and the restoration of the monastery of San Cugat del Vallés (Sant Cugat del Vallès), which was destroyed in 375/985 by Islamic Spain's Napoleonic-like ruler Muḥammad Ibn Abī 'Āmir.⁹¹ If the Crusade indulgence could be attached to a variety of enterprises, from a major expedition, like the Jerusalem Crusade, to a minor undertaking, like the restoration of the monastery of San Cugat, there is every reason to believe that there were other crusading enterprises indulgenced by Rome during the eleventh century whose indulgences are no longer extant.

Besides the Crusade indulgence, the Church created other practices and institutions to promote crusading. Pope Alexander II not only bestowed the Crusade indulgence on Count Roger and on "all others who were helping him to win Sicily from the pagans and to hold it forever in the faith of Christ", he also "sent a banner from the Roman see, decorated with the seal of apostolic authority, under which the count and his men, trusting in the protection of St. Peter, were to rise up and wage war against the Saracens even more securely". This banner was a sign of St. Peter's protection and indicated papal sponsorship of the war.⁹²

Liturgical preparations for battle

Understandably, religious rites and rituals played an important role in the Sicilian Crusade. The sacrament of Penance and the reception of Holy Communion held particular prominence. The warriors commonly went to confession and received communion before engaging in battle. Just prior to launching the invasion of Sicily, Duke Robert "ordered everyone to be shriven by the priests and, after receiving penance, to take communion".⁹³ Before the Battle of Castrogiovanni, Robert instructed his troops: "Let us purge then our sins by confession and penitence and receive the body and blood of Christ and prepare our arms".⁹⁴ At the Battle of

⁸⁹ On the indulgenced crusading enterprises of the eleventh century prior to Pope Urban's indulgenced Crusade to "rescue Jerusalem and the other Churches of Asia from the power of the Saracens", see note 36, above.

⁹⁰ See note 13, above.

⁹¹ See note 36, above.

⁹² Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 44–45 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 111; Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 30–50, 123, 168–169; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 35–56, 135, 185; David C. Douglas, *The Norman Achievement, 1050–1100* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 102; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 164; Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 20.

⁹³ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 32 (II.9); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 90.

⁹⁴ Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, 242 (V.23); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 141.



Figure 7. A Christian and a Muslim warrior engage in single combat. Fragment of a floor mosaic from the destroyed church of Santa Maria Maggiore of Vercelli (Lombardy), erected in 1148. Reproduced with permission from the Museo Camillo Leone, Vercelli.

Cerami, Malaterra recounts that “after confessing to God with great devotion – with the priests serving as witnesses – and receiving penance, [the Normans] commended themselves to the mercy of God and, trusting in his aid, they set out to do battle with the enemy”.⁹⁵ The day prior to the naval battle of Syracuse (May 1086), Roger roused his men at dawn to hear mass. The communal mass was held in conjunction with the sacrament of Penance, for Malaterra tells us specifically that they confessed their sins to the priests and received Holy Communion.⁹⁶

A religious war

Spiritual preparation, including confession and communion, disposed the Norman warriors to participate in a war that was of religious value and that accorded religious benefits. This war had religious value because it was waged on behalf of a society that found its supreme expression and its highest values in a given religion, and was directed against an alien society similarly organised (Figure 7).⁹⁷ Due to its religious merit, the war was manifested in religious terms. The avowed aim of the war was religious in nature: to liberate Christians in Sicily from Muslim servitude, and to enable them to practise their religious rites without hindrance. The Crusade

⁹⁵ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 42 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 107.

⁹⁶ Malaterra, 86 (IV.2); trans. Wolf, 178. On the liturgical preparations for battle in Spain’s many Crusades, see O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade*, 185–190.

⁹⁷ On the nature of religious warfare, see O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade*, 7–14. Unlike Erdmann, O’Callaghan makes no dogmatic separation between pre-1095 religious warfare and post-1095 religious warfare. In the pre-1095 Mediterranean world, as well as in the post-1095 Mediterranean world, religious warfare maintained its essential feature as “a conflict between two societies, in each of which the spiritual and the temporal, the sacred and the secular, were wholly integrated”.

was not a cloak by which "a papally orchestrated war of conquest" was disguised, as Robert Bartlett believes, even though the Crusade was expressed in terms of the expansion of the Church.⁹⁸ Nor was the Crusade a "devotional war" fixated upon the sanctity and salvation of the individual, as Jonathan Riley-Smith claims.

Religion lay at the heart of the crusading enterprise. But religion was not just a system for "the welfare of the soul [and] the salvation of the individual as an individual",⁹⁹ or a digest of doctrine and dogma, or the ways of a clerical-hierarchical Church organisation, or the practice and performance of rites and ceremonies associated with worship. It was something more. It was a worshipping community imbued with a clear sense of God's abiding presence in the unfolding events of history. Above all, it was the very essence and core of Latin Christian identity. Medieval Latin society was based on a religious citizenship, and one's religious citizenship took pride of place over all other forms of communal identity: political, social, and cultural. Communal diversities at the political, social, and cultural level were themselves coloured by religion, so that the whole of society had a religious orientation. This was not because medieval Christians were essentially more religious than their modern counterparts, or less interested in the material world. It was because the public realm was inextricably connected with religion, and religion was inextricably connected with the public realm.

Religion – with its public structure and spaces, public buildings and rituals, public expressions and symbols, public pieties and sacralities, public feasts and festivities, public processions and holidays, public fasts and alms, and public charity and obligations – was the vital centre of the entire medieval social order. It is therefore not surprising that religion would give to the Norman conquest of Sicily its distinctive character, and that a religious impulse would express itself openly in the Norman accounts of the Sicilian Crusade. According to Amatus, Duke Robert called upon the Normans to go to Sicily "in order to drive out the Saracens, who had taken the island from Christian hands",¹⁰⁰ and he "invited them to take Sicily, saying, 'I should like to deliver the Christians and Catholics who are bound in servitude to the Saracens. I greatly desire to free them from their servitude and to wreak vengeance for this injury to God'".¹⁰¹

Malaterra presents the religious motive for the Crusade succinctly, and indeed eloquently, in one statement: "to win Sicily from the pagans and to hold it forever in the faith of Christ".¹⁰² He champions Count Roger as the leader of the Crusade and describes both the religious and the materialistic interests that prompted his actions:

⁹⁸ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 20, 253. On the Crusades as wars to "exalt" (*exaltare*) or "expand", "enlarge", or "extend" (*dilatare*) the Church or the Christian faith, see notes 113 and 114 (below) and related text; Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 321 and n. 138; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 349–350 and n. 138.

⁹⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, volumes I–III (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), I: 106. Riley-Smith privatises the spiritual and religious tropism of medieval Europeans and makes of the Crusades "an act of self-sanctification" (see note 15, above, and associated text).

¹⁰⁰ Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, 231 (V.9); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 136.

¹⁰¹ Amatus, 234 (V.12); trans. Dunbar, 137–138.

¹⁰² Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 45 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 111.

Count Roger of Calabria heard that Sicily was in the hands of the unbelievers . . . He was seized by the desire to capture it, for he was always eager for conquest. He perceived two means by which he would profit, one for his soul and the other for his material benefit, if he brought back to Divine worship a country given over to idolatry, and if he himself possessed the temporal fruits and income from this land, thus spending in the service of God things which had been unjustly stolen by a people who knew him not.¹⁰³

This passage perfectly illustrates that “personal gain and self-interest were quite compatible with piety and indeed could reinforce it”.¹⁰⁴

Despite manifold evidence to show that the Sicilian Crusade was a religious war in which religion was a main motivating force, Hubert Houben contends that “the motivation for the conquest of Sicily was not primarily religious [because] it was not about freeing of holy places or combating Islam”. “That Sicily was won back for Christianity” by a war that entailed the “freeing of holy places” (churches, monasteries, and other religious houses) and the “combating of Islam”, is, for Houben, “just a by-product of the conquest”.¹⁰⁵ The Normans did not win back Sicily for Christianity as a kind of “by-product of the conquest”. The winning of Sicily for Christianity was the goal of the Norman enterprise from the start, and that is why “the Norman historians represent the Sicilian undertaking as a crusade from the first”.¹⁰⁶ Houben seeks to construct a strict hierarchy of motivating factors in which religious motivation takes a back seat to a desire for conquest. But, as Malaterra so aptly conveys, religious motives did not reveal themselves in perfect purity, and eagerness for conquest did not cancel out or diminish a desire to “[bring] back to Divine worship a country given over to idolatry”.

Battling on behalf of Christendom

The conflict was conceived as being waged on behalf of Christendom and for the exaltation of the Holy Faith. According to Malaterra, Count Roger addressed his army before the Battle of Cerami as “most valiant young soldiers of the Christian army”, and he reminded them that “we are all inscribed with the name of Christ” and that Christ “would not desert his sign unless offended”. He assured his troops: “Our God, the God of gods, is omnipotent”. Just as “Gideon wiped out many thousands of the enemy with only a few men because he never had any doubts about God’s assistance”, Count Roger told his troops that they would be able to defeat the Muslims against overwhelming odds because they had God on their side and were secure in His protection (Figure 6).¹⁰⁷ The sign that Malaterra refers to is “the cross that they had all been bearing on their foreheads since baptism”.¹⁰⁸ Erdmann finds this reference to the insignia of the Cross particularly significant,

¹⁰³ Malaterra, 29 (II.1); trans. Wolf, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Robert I. Burns, “The many crusades of Valencia’s conquest (1225–1280): A historiographical labyrinth”, in *On the Social Origins of Medieval Institutions: Essays in Honor of Joseph F. O’Callaghan*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and Theresa M. Vann (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 167–177, at p. 170.

¹⁰⁵ Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 20.

¹⁰⁶ See note 1, above, and related text.

¹⁰⁷ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 43–44 (II.33); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 109.

¹⁰⁸ Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 123; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 135.

for it is but a prelude to the two miraculous appearances of the Cross during the Battle of Cerami – on the banner carried by St. George (Figure 5) and on a similar banner that materialises on the lance of Count Roger. In addition, the Cross would figure prominently in the Crusades, with the wearing of the Cross becoming the outward symbol of the Crusades and the taking of the Cross becoming one of the key rituals of the Crusades.¹⁰⁹

There is no compelling evidence to suggest, however, that Malaterra's references to the Cross at Cerami are dependent upon any "First" Crusade narrative. A much simpler explanation lies closer at hand: namely, that the victory over Islam was already being portrayed as "the triumph of the Cross". In 1058, Count Ramón Berenguer I of Barcelona (r. 1035–1076) spoke of future Christian advances into al-Andalus as "the triumph of the Cross" (*crucis triumphum*) when he dedicated the new cathedral of Barcelona after it had been rebuilt following its destruction by Muḥammad Ibn Abī Āmir in 375/985.¹¹⁰ At Barcelona, as at Cerami, the use of the Cross is clearly associated with Emperor Constantine and his famous vision of the Cross in 312 at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The Cross was a potent symbol of Christian triumph and as such was invoked in Spain, in Sicily, and later at Clermont to rally Christian warriors against the forces of Islam.¹¹¹

The adoption of the Cross as a symbol of the Crusades and the establishment of a formal rite for taking the Cross as part of "the business of the Cross" (*negotium crucis*) was a long-drawn-out process. The various elements that scholars group together as the "apparatus of the Crusade" (e.g. the indulgence, vow, Cross, and privileges) were originally a diverse assemblage of components that after a time crystallised into a standard panoply.¹¹² The sequence of steps that led to the adoption of the Cross as the symbol of the Crusades can be traced back to Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge, but Count Roger's victory at Cerami was an important intermediate step in this process.

As a triumphal symbol, the Cross stood for the eventual exaltation of the Christian faith. For William of Apulia (fl. 1087–1099), the impulse "to exalt the Holy Faith" lay behind Count Roger's desire to conquer Sicily, and this motive gave to the Norman war in Sicily a "noble" purpose. "None of [Count Roger's] brothers", he tells us, "excellent though they were, entered upon so noble a war (*tam nobile bellum*), for wishing to exalt (*exaltare*) the Holy Faith in which we all live, he fought continually against the Sicilians, enemies of the Divine Name, and dedicated his youth largely to this work until the time when the submission of the

¹⁰⁹ Erdmann, 317–19; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, 345–48.

¹¹⁰ *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. Giovan Domenico Mansi, volume XIX (Florence: Expensis Antonii Zatta, 1767), col. 882; Ernst-Dieter Hehl, "War, peace and the Christian order", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 4: C. 1024–c. 1198, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, volumes I–II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), I: 185–228, at 197–198.

¹¹¹ Others disagree; cf. Riley-Smith, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 41: "More commonly the cross was a badge of penance and a call to imitate Christ". For a full discussion of the crusading Cross and its meaning, see "The Cross of the crusaders", in *idem, Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Giles Constable (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 45–91.

¹¹² Chevedden, "Crusade indulgence", 253–254.

Sicilian race would allow him the right to rest".¹¹³ Pope Urban II sees Count Roger's victories in Sicily as the good effects of his "prudence" (*prudentialiam*) and his "probity" (*probitas*), on account of which God "has exalted [him] with many triumphs and honours" and "has greatly expanded (*dilatavit*) the Church of God (*ecclesiam Dei*) into Muslim territories".¹¹⁴ Here, the pope makes plain the purpose behind the crusading enterprise: "to expand", "enlarge", or "extend" (*dilatare*) "the Church of God" into territories that have fallen under Muslim domination. Urban saw the Crusades as the realisation of a *translatio regni* that would "repel the savagery of the Saracens"¹¹⁵ and re-establish Christian rule in the realms where it had formerly been prominent.

The twofold meaning of Crusade

The "noble" war not only sought to make Sicily once more a part of Christendom, it also sought to restore Christianity to its former glory and power. Crusading, as the Normans conceived of it, was divided into two phases: (1) the *Crusade of reconquest*; and (2) the *Crusade of restoring the Church*. The Normans made a direct linkage between these two "Crusades" from the very beginning.¹¹⁶ One of Count Roger's avowed motives in launching the Crusade was to take possession of "the temporal fruits and income from this land" and to utilise these resources "in the service of God". Booty captured in a raid on Sicily in 1061 was used to rebuild a church near Reggio that had recently been destroyed.¹¹⁷ After Catania was taken in 1070, Roger "immediately ordered that a citadel be constructed and a church be built in honour of St. Gregory".¹¹⁸ When the Normans captured Palermo in January of 1072, one of the first acts of Duke Robert and Count Roger was to restore and reconsecrate the Cathedral Church of St. Mary, which had been converted into a mosque.¹¹⁹

The restoration of the Sicilian Church involved both the material rebuilding of the churches and monasteries, as well as the regeneration of a new ecclesiastical organisation. In Palermo, the Greek archbishop, "who had been expelled by the infidels . . . and had been celebrating the Christian religion as best he could in the poor church of St. Cyriacus", was instated in the newly rededicated Cathedral Church of St. Mary. Malaterra portrays the restoration of the cathedral and the installation of the archbishop as actions that have "revived the cult of the Christian

¹¹³ William of Apulia, *La geste de Robert*, 174 (III.194–203).

¹¹⁴ Urban II to Count Roger, 5 July 1098, Urban II, "Epistolae et privilegia", *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, volumes I–CCXXI (Paris: Migne, 1841–1864), CLI: col. 506C (hereafter *PL*); Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 108 (IV.29); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 213; Erich Caspar, "Die Legatengewalt der normannisch-sicilischen Herrscher im 12. Jahrhundert", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 7 (1904): 189–219, at 218–219; Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*, 18; Robinson, *The Papacy*, 375.

¹¹⁵ See note 79, above, and related text.

¹¹⁶ Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 121–122; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 133–134.

¹¹⁷ Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, 232–33 (V.10); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 137; Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 30–31 (II.4–7); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 87–89. The classic study of the *Crusade of reconquest* and the *Crusade of regenerating the Church*, explored at length in its Valencian context, is Robert I. Burns, *The Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: Reconstruction on a Thirteenth-Century Frontier*, volumes I–II (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

¹¹⁸ Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, 276 (VI.14); trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 156.

¹¹⁹ Amatus, 282–83 (VI.19–20); trans. Dunbar, 158.

religion".¹²⁰ In 1080, Roger established a bishopric at Troina and laid the foundations for a church in the city.¹²¹ Shortly thereafter, he constructed a church in Messina in honour of St. Nicholas and endowed it "with towers and various possessions to provide revenues for it". He assigned clerics to the church and "prepared it to serve as an episcopal see, though it was to be tied to the Cathedral of Troina".¹²²

The pace of reconstruction picked up dramatically as the conquest of Sicily drew to a close. With only Butera and Noto awaiting their final doom, Count Roger "ordered churches built throughout Sicily. In a great many places, he himself contributed at his own expense so that they might more easily be built".¹²³ New bishoprics were established at Agrigento, Mazara del Vallo, Catania, and Syracuse.¹²⁴ In his diploma establishing the bishopric of Catania (26 April 1092), Roger proudly announces: "I have built churches in various suitable places of Sicily; at the command of the supreme apostolic pontiff I have placed bishops in them and the same pontiff of the Roman see has approved, has given permission and has consecrated those bishops".¹²⁵

Conclusion

The crusader spirit permeates the Norman narratives of the Sicilian Crusade. This spirit and the strongly religious dimension of the Norman war in Sicily cannot be dismissed as "entirely a later construct" that has little to do with what actually happened, since this spirit and the religious tenor of the conflict are on full view in the *History* of Amatus, a chronicle that cannot "anachronistically reflect the concepts of the First Crusade" because it was written "at the latest before 1087".¹²⁶ The crusader spirit is revealed in the Norman conviction that their conquest of Sicily was sanctioned and supported by God. It is in the same spirit that the Normans sought to liberate Christians in Sicily from Muslim servitude and to

¹²⁰ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 53 (II.45); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 125; William of Apulia, *La geste de Robert*, 182 (III.332–36); Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 158, n. 43. The Greek archbishop, Nicodemos, was soon to be replaced by a Latin one named Alcherius (Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 174).

¹²¹ Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 68 (III.19); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 149; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 174; Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 19–20.

¹²² Malaterra, *De rebus gestis*, 77 (III.32); trans. Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger*, 163.

¹²³ Malaterra, 88–89 (IV.7); trans. Wolf, 182.

¹²⁴ Malaterra, 89–90 (IV.7); trans. Wolf, 183–184; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 174–176; *idem*, *Latin Church*, 192; Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 21.

¹²⁵ Roger I's diploma of 26 April 1092, founding the bishopric of Catania; *PL*, CLI: col. 83A; Hans Walter Klewitz, *Reformpapsttum und Kardinalkolleg: Die Entstehung des Kardinalskollegiums, Studien über die Wiederherstellung der römischen Kirche in Süditalien: das Ende des Reformpapsttums* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1957), p. 179; Robinson, *Papacy*, 376. On the regeneration of a new ecclesiastical organisation in Sicily, see Cosimo Damiano Fonseca, "Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche dell'Italia meridionale e Ruggero il Gran Conte", in *Ruggero il Gran Conte e l'inizio dello Stato normanno: Atti delle seconde giornate normanno-sveve, Bari, 19–21 maggio 1975*, ed. Ernesto Quagliarello [Fonti e studi del Corpus membranarum Italicarum, volume XII] (Bari: Dedalo, 1991), pp. 43–66; Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 186–233; *idem*, "Papacy and the rulers of southern Italy", 151–184; *idem*, *Latin Church*.

¹²⁶ Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 164, and "Introduction", in Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, trans. Dunbar, *History of the Normans*, 1, 20, suggests "a date a year or two" on either side of 1080 as "most probable" for the completion of the *History* of Amatus.

hold Sicily “forever in the faith of Christ”. It is in this spirit that they not only sought to make Sicily once more a part of Christendom, but also to restore Christianity to its former glory and power.

It was not enough for the Normans to reconquer former Christian territory; the Church had to be restored. The military victory over Islam was the first stage in achieving what was considered to be the main objective of the Crusade: the regeneration of the Church. In true crusader spirit, Duke Robert spoke of his capture of Messina as “the work of God”. In this spirit, Pope Alexander II granted the Crusade indulgence in 1063 to the participants in the Sicilian Crusade, and it is in this same spirit that the Normans accepted papal overlordship of the enterprise. In this spirit, the Normans waged their war in Sicily on behalf of Christendom and regarded Christ as the leader of the Crusade.¹²⁷

This powerful spirit was not born of papal fiat. This spirit came from below and found its political expression in the heroic deeds of Duke Robert Guiscard and his younger brother Count Roger, “the most glorious princes”.¹²⁸ These Christian princes determined their own deeds and destiny, and at the same time were determined by them. By engaging in a programme of Christian reconquest and restoration, they did even more: they determined the character of the eleventh-century Crusades.

The Sicilian Crusade, the Spanish Crusades, and the Crusade to liberate the Eastern Churches were an outgrowth of the ongoing conflict between Islam and Western Christendom in the Mediterranean world. The Crusades responded to the needs and interests of Christian society as a whole – the desire to mount a needed counter-attack against Islam and to raise up a “fallen and prostrate Church”.¹²⁹ The societal desire for crusading came before papal initiatives supporting this desire. The Crusades took their form and structure from the historically rooted values and norms of the community of Christian peoples (*populus christianus*).

The Crusades did not clash with prevailing Christian ethical and moral standards, as some scholars believe. They were not a perversion of the idea of Christian pilgrimage, as Erdmann contends. They did not depend on “peaceful pilgrimages” turning into “expeditions of armed conquest” or on “the unification of holy war with pilgrimage”.¹³⁰ The Crusades were not the product of “a new and revolutionary element [entering] the tradition of journeying to the Holy Land”, as Riley-Smith claims. No “radical thought” or “unprecedented” idea went into the creation of the Crusades, as Riley-Smith maintains. Nor did the Crusades lead to the overthrow of earlier patterns of thought regarding war.¹³¹ Rather, the values and norms of Latin Christian society gave shape and form to crusading ideas and institutions.

¹²⁷ The crusader spirit of the Normans invites comparison with the crusader spirit of another age and clime; cf. Burns, *Crusader Kingdom*, I: 12–15.

¹²⁸ See note 31, above, and related text.

¹²⁹ *De expugnatione Lyxbonensi: The Conquest of Lisbon*, ed. and trans. Charles Wendell David [Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies, volume XXIV] (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 78–79.

¹³⁰ Erdmann, *Entstehung*, vii, 306–308, 319; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, xxxiii, 331–333, 348.

¹³¹ Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 39, 48, 52, 77, 160, 168, 189; *idem*, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 31, 32, 39.

These values and norms had already shaped a Western Holy War reaction against Islam that had been gathering pace since the ninth century, fully institutionalised and supported by the Church. In 1059, papal endorsement of a course of action that had previously been contemplated by the Normans gave legal status to the crusading enterprise by conferring legitimacy on the return of Christian rule to Sicily. From 1059 onward, a now independently powerful papacy, at first embryonic in form, approved whatever measures and actions seemed appropriate in the quest "to liberate the Church of God" from Islamic rule. It was this experience of successive enterprises "to liberate the Church of God", rather than any theory, that inspired Pope Urban II to elaborate and affirm the Crusades as a *translatio regni* and to conceptualise the Jerusalem Crusade in the context of *ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei*. In 1095, there was nothing exceptional in Urban's efforts "to liberate the Church of God" and "rescue Jerusalem and the other Churches of Asia from the power of the Saracens".¹³² These objectives, which were clearly enunciated in the Clermont crusading decrees, merely express the goal that the Roman Church was already committed to achieving, now extended to the eastern Mediterranean.

What began at Melfi in 1059 was not to be limited to the central Mediterranean. The Crusades continued because the struggle between Islam and Western Christendom was not restricted to Sicily. A year after Roger's victory at Cerami in 1063, the Crusades spread to Spain, and by the end of the eleventh century the Crusades had reached the eastern Mediterranean. The desire "to liberate the Church of God" counted for something more than "knightly piety and expansionist war"¹³³ and produced a cause that the peoples of the Latin West thought worth fighting for.

¹³² *Councils of Urban II*, ed. Somerville, 74, 124.

¹³³ Erdmann, *Entstehung*, 106; trans. Baldwin and Goffart, *Origin*, 117. Riley-Smith takes the "knightly piety" component of Erdmann's thesis and derives a theory of the Crusades from it that boils down to the simple assertion that "the idea of the knight as a penitent" alone provides the motive for action required for the Crusades (Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 63; see also Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970–c. 1130* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993]).